Date A Live Volume 7

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These are novel illustrations that were included in **Volume 7 - Miku Truth**

Truth MIKU

SpiritNo.10i
AstralDress-PrincessType Weapon−ThroneType [Nahemah]

DATE デート A 美九トゥルース・ LIVE ライブ

［電子特別版］

橘公司
The author
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07

ファンタジア文庫

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東京都在住。第20回ファンタジア長編小説大賞準入選作『蒼穹のカルマ』でデビュー。キャラの名前が読みづらいとたまに言われます。不動のトップ「狂三」を始めとして、「五河」「八舞」「誘宵」など。確かに普段あまり使わない読みをしている場合があるので読みづらいかもしれません。ただし「美九」を「よしぎゅう」と読んだ友人。テメーは駄目だ。

イラスト：つなこ
カバーデザイン：草野剛

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07

DATE A LIVE Truth MIKU

デート・ア・ライブ トゥルー 美九ルート

「少し、じっとしていてください ましし」

精霊――狂三（くるみ）

「狂三？」

高校生――五河士道（いつかしどう）

「う……く――」
士道のクラスメイト――鳶一折紙（とびいちおりがみ）

「あまり殺したくはないのですが……
どうやら頭が回るようですし、
放置するのは望ましくありませんね」
最強の魔術師――エレン・M（ミラ）・メイザース

「約束――したからな」
「え……？」
精霊――美九（みく）

「〈王国〉が、反転した。さあ、控えろ人類」

DEMインダストリー業務執行取締役――アイザック・ウェストコット

CONTENTS

第六章　悪夢、再び …… 004
第七章　二人きりの攻城戦 …… 061
第八章　炎と影に沈む街 …… 116
第九章　魔王 …… 180
第一〇章　鏖殺せし暴虐公 …… 258
終　章　祭の後 …… 319

あとがき …… 333

精霊
THE SPIRIT

隣界に存在する特殊災害指定生命体。発生原因、存在理由ともに不明。
こちらの世界に現れる際、空間震を発生させ、周囲に甚大な被害を及ぼす。
また、その戦闘能力は強大。

対処法1
WAYS OF COPING 1

武力を以てこれを殲滅する。
ただし前述の通り、非常に高い戦闘能力を持つため、達成は困難。

対処法2
WAYS OF COPING 2

――デートして、デレさせる。

美九トゥルース

Truth MIKU

SpiritNo.10i
AstralDress-PrincessType Weapon-ThroneType [Nahemah]

Chapter 6: Nightmare, Reappear

Part 1

"You seem to be in some sort of trouble – ne, Shidou-san, would you like, to negotiate with me?" From within a dark room in the abandoned building.

The girl who had appeared from the dark shadows, said so while smiling in an odd manner.

"What…?"

The sight in front of him, caused Shidou to be shocked and surprised, to the point where he could not even scream, where he could only watch. It was a girl, so beautiful, that it caused people to shudder in fear.

Then again, to use such a phrase, "shuddering in fear" …… which did not describe beauty at all, to describe the girl in front of him, the reason for that can be understood by the words that she said. What was on her smiling face was not a face of kindness or joy, but rather, a face of a predator, one that caused people to have goose bumps as a result of nervousness.

Black, uneven hair on both sides, shaking while accompanied by a giggle, with a blood red dress wrapping her frail body. However, what truly made this girl unique was her eyes. On her face was a pair of differently-coloured eyes. If one looked closely, they could see her left eye showing a clock, with the fingers ticking away in a regular manner.

"Tokisaki… Kurumi…!?"

Shidou only managed to squeeze the name of the girl from his throat. Kurumi. Shidou's former classmate – the worst Spirit who murdered on her own volition.

As Kurumi listened to Shidou, her eyebrows twitched slightly as she relaxed her shoulders.

"Ara, did I mistake things. –I saw a Spirit abducting Yoshino-san and the Yamai sisters, Tohka-san captured by DEM Industries… and your helpless expression."

"Wha—"

Shidou began to tense up.

—It was exactly as Kurumi said.

A few hours ago, Shidou had been in the Tengu Square where the Tenou Festival is held, against the Spirit that controls music and sound – Miku Izayoi.

However, Yoshino, Kaguya, Yuzuru and the audience were all controlled by Miku, as a result of her Angel "<Army-Breaker Gabriel Diva>"

In addition, Kotori, who had heard the "music" through the speaker, had also became an enemy… coupled with the sudden appearance of Ellen, a Wizard of DEM Industries, who had abducted Tohka.

Shidou, who had barely escaped with his life, had managed to successfully hide in an abandoned building away from the streets, but he could do nothing other than hit the floor weakly with his fists.

Indeed, she was correct. No, it was because of this, that he couldn't understand what she meant.

"…Why do you know all of these?"

"Ufufu, please don't ask such boring questions. As long as it concerns Shidou-san, doesn't it mean that I have a right to know?"

As she said, Kurumi revealed a cute smile. For some reason, the shadow at Kurumi's feet moved at the same time, as if one could almost hear a giggle from the other side of the shadow.

"…"

Shidou gulped down his saliva as he recounted the events of several months ago. Indeed, Kurumi possessed many "eyes" and "ears". Having a few " Kurumis" in the crowd isn't surprising.

As for Kurumi, she knew that right now, there is nothing else that can protect Shidou. There is nobody to save Shidou: anybody who would prevent Kurumi from eating him are all absent.

"Ku…"

Shidou curled up his body, withdrawing a leg in the process. As if seeming very happy at the sight of a helpless Shidou, Kurumi twisted her lips.

"Fufu, please calm down. –At least, right now, I don't have any plans for Shidou-san"

"What…?"

Shidou frowned at Kurumi's words.

"What do you mean? Didn't you intend to "eat" me?"

"Mm, I don't disagree –But, as I have mentioned earlier. Right now, I wish to negotiate with Shidou-san."

"Do you really want me to believe what you say?"

"Do I have a reason to lie now?"

"Uu…"

Shidou was silenced by her words.

Indeed, as long as Kurumi wished, killing or eating Shidou would not be a problem for her. There was no reason for her, who had the say of whether he lived, to lie right now. However, when it came to the girl in front of him, it was one who had plans to watch an expression of peace turn into horror: there was also a possibility that Kurumi had orchestrated all of this.

As Shidou thought hopelessly while keeping up his guard, he looked back at her and asked:

"What was it that you wanted to negotiate with me?"

"Mm— it's about what happens after."

"After?"

As Kurumi listened to Shidou's shocked words, she rhythmically stepped on the floor as she approached Shidou.

Then, as she stood close to Shidou, she placed her lips next to his ear and whispered:

"Ne, Shidou-san. Weren't you going to help Tohka-san?"

"What…?"

As Shidou listened to Kurumi, he couldn't help but let out a shocked voice.

"What do… you mean"

"Exactly as it says. Shidou-san, don't you want to rescue Tohka-san from DEM Industries?"

"Is, isn't that obvious…! Isn't the enemy an organization that kills Spirits? How could I leave Tohka in the clutches of those people!"

"Ehehe, well said, well said. Now this is our Shidou-san."

Kurumi laughed much more happily. However, Shidou frowned, due to an unknown uneasiness

"But, why… do you want to know about these things?"

"Ehehe, hehe…"

As Kurumi maintained the strange smile on her face, she reached out her tongue to lick Shidou's ear.

"…nngh"

"So you want to save Tohka-san… but no matter how much you want to save her, it's impossible with just Shidou-san, isn't it? After all, you don't even know where Tohka has been taken to. And even if you do find the location, you have to prepare against DEM, who are focused on capturing the Spirits.

Besides, you do know the Wizard who captured Tohka-san, didn't you? She's a troublesome woman. An opponent that is unmatched for humanity"

"Tsk! You don't have to tell me! But, because of that, I-"

"Eh, eh. As expected of Shidou-san to say something like this. However, this is an act for a brave fool. You won't be able to accomplish anything with just your emotions alone. If Shidou-san is to go alone, he'll definitely either be killed or captured."

"Ku… what exactly are you trying to say"

"Ufufu… do you not understand? I've already said it— I'm helping you."

"Wha…!?"

Shidou widened his eyes upon listening to the unbelievable words coming out from Kurumi.

"Help…? Kurumi? Me?"

"Mm. I'm going to help you save Tohka-san."

As Kurumi said so, she smiled again.

Unable to understand Kurumi's motives, Shidou held his forehead with his hands in order to calm his confused mental state.

Kurumi is a Spirit— hence, possessing an Angel of incomparable strength. Indeed, if her assistance is obtained, then there is some hope in this nearly impossible goal of saving Tohka.

Even if he understood this, Shidou didn't raise his hands and celebrate in delight.

"…what are your intentions?"

"My intentions… I simply wanted, to help out Shidou-san."

Considering Shidou will never believe her, Kurumi decided not to mince her words.

"You…"

"Ara ara ara"

Listening to the words of Shidou with his eyes half-open, Kurumi intentionally placed her hands at her eyes, acting as though she was crying.

"This is sad. After all, I'm just doing this in the interests of Shidou-san"

"…"

"Distrust. Hm, this can't be helped either."

As Shidou continued to stare at Kurumi with suspicious eyes, he shrugged his shoulders, as though he was getting tired of her actions.

"Truthfully speaking, I have my own reasons in searching for DEM Industries. As a reward for helping, I would also like to use Shidou-san as bait. It's give and take."

"Reasons…?"

"Mm. I wish to find someone."

"Someone? Who could that be?"

"It's a secret."

Kurumi placed a finger on her lips and blinked at Shidou. In return, Shidou casted eyes of suspicion upon her.

"Please relax. I am not lying – of course, I won't force you to believe what I say."

"Uu…"

Listening up to now, Shidou unhappily closed his mouth.

Truthfully speaking, it was still impossible to fully trust Kurumi.

However, her existence was indeed Shidou's remaining final chance.

It was a question as to whether the medicine within the bottle was a deadly poison or an antidote. If a decision wasn't reached – if nothing was done, one would collapse from the illness.

Hence… despite the risk, Shidou had no choice but to accept.

Even if it were poison, in order to save Tohka, he'd accept it.

"…I understand. I trust you. Please, assist me, Kurumi…!"

Shidou said so as he clenched his fists. Kurumi elegantly lifted the hems of her dress and curtsied.

"Mm – it'd be my pleasure."

Kurumi did a whimsical action, which resembled that of a rich spoilt girl bowing, as she giggled.

Afterwards, as though to let her dress flutter, she spun and rhythmically stepped towards Shidou.

"Then, then, let's take action. We don't have spare time to waste. Let's hurry, so we can settle this, before it's too late."

"Yes, what can I do? I've to sacrifice in order to save Tohka."

As she listened to Shidou's words, Kurumi laughed even more wildly.

"Aha, aha, amazing, Tohka-san. She's able to capture Shidou-san's attention so whole-heartedly. Ufufu, it makes people jealous."

"Don't joke with me."

"It's not a joke – though unfortunately, it's still not yet possible. Right now, ' we' are confirming Tohka-san's location. Can you wait a little while longer?"

"You sure prepared for this."

"Ufufu. Because, there's no way Shidou-san would reject my request."

"Ku…"

Shidou revealed a face of unhappiness at that point, as though he had been played with. Seeing that, Kurumi became even more cheerful.

"Bu, but, we don't have anything to do in this case, don't we?"

"Not so. Before rescuing Tohka, we still have to address another issue, don't we?"

Kurumi said so, as though she intended to interrupt Shidou's words.

Immediately, Shidou realized what Kurumi was driving at. He sighed deeply, and said that name.

"Miku… is it?"

"Mm. That lady who specializes in singing, indeed goes by that name."

That's correct. Right now, Shidou was hidden in this abandoned building away from the streets. It was due to the Spirit: Miku Izayoi.

Miku used her music and voice to control people, using her terrifying advantage to increase her range of control, going all-out to search for Shidou. That was most likely – to punish Shidou, who had betrayed her trust.

Seeing Shidou recount so intently, Kurumi giggled, as though she thought of something.

"…what is it?"

"Ah, it's just, I was thinking about what happened today on the stage. Ufufu, how suitable, Shidou-san. Or should I say, Shiori-san?"

"…ugu"

Shidou frowned and moved his line of sight away.

In order to conquer the men-hating Miku, cross-dressing under desperation, all of it, had been observed by Kurumi.

"Even so, regardless, Miku is desperately trying to capture Shidou-san. And thousands of people as well as three Spirits have joined her… is that correct?"

"…yes, that's correct."

"Mm, in that case let's try to solve the issue from there. She's currently increasing her range of support and if she is to continue, it may get in the way of us rescuing Tohka. If Shidou-san were to be captured by her, it'd be worrying for me too."

"Solving… that's easy to say"

"In reality, it isn't really that difficult of a question. If we were to look at it, she isn't one suitable for prolonged battle."

"Even so, Miku has an Angel which can control people with 'sound'."

"That's not an issue. I'm not that naïve to the point of being swayed by such a performance. If I had full say in the matter, I'd be capable of killing her elegantly, wouldn't I?"

As if jokingly saying, Kurumi stretched out her index finger and thumb, and did a "PA!" action similar to shooting a gun. Shidou quickly shook his head.

"No, we can't do that."

"Ufufu, I was joking. I understand the kind Shidou-san wouldn't want to resort to such means to settle matters. –Because Shidou-san is one who is crazy enough to want to save a person like me."

As she said so, Kurumi laughed again. But for some reason, this laughter felt slightly different from the cheerful laughter earlier.

Before Shidou pointed this out, she continued.

"But, if we can't kill her, there are some slight problems. Even if we aren't able to convince her in the shortest time, at the very least we will need to make an agreement with her, that while we're saving Tohka-san she is not to disrupt us in any way."

"An… agreement?"

Shidou muttered in a low voice. Indeed, they couldn't let the victim pool increase further, they had to do something about that. "But, how are we going to negotiate with her?"

Indeed, the major problem was the large crowd of people. There was a human wall of unknown thickness protecting Miku. Even approaching her would be difficult.

Realising what Shidou was thinking of, Kurumi used her hand to lift Shidou's chin.

"If we could let Miku-san and Shidou-san have some time to themselves… how does that sound?"

"What? If, we could pull that off…"

Shidou stopped immediately, and shook his head.

"No, it'd be too difficult. And you saw it for yourself, she's not a good target for negotiation, especially when I'm extremely hated by her now… and more importantly, that Spirit, who possesses the natural ability to manipulate people with her 'voice', she has innately different values of humanity from others."

Listening to Shidou's words, Kurumi twitched her eyebrows.

"What is it, Kurumi?"

"…that, how is that so"

"What…?"

His chin currently being held, Shidou was having difficulty understanding Kurumi's words. As such, Kurumi partially opened her eyes, and replied.

"I can't exactly express it well, but regarding her values, is it really natural?"

"What do you mean?"

"How do I put it, that lady, she gives off a strange feeling…"

Then, Kurumi began to hum quietly. After a few seconds, she lifted her head, as though she thought of something.

"Shidou-san. Do you have any of Miku-san's possessions?"

"Miku's… possessions? Why are we talking about that?"

"If my hypothesis is accurate, we may indeed be able to find her weak point."

"What did you say…?"

Shidou raised his eyebrows as he spoke.

It didn't seem like a lie. Although he didn't know of what to do, the idea seemed like a plausible one. Although it wasn't substantiated, without any other alternative means, they would have to make do with this as their clue.

Even if so, the enemy is a Spirit. Such items shouldn't be easily obtained—

"…no, wait."

Shidou's cheek twitched as he touched his chin.

Part 2

"Nn… uu…"

Accompanied by small moaning sounds, Tohka opened her eyes, and yawned.

"Uwaaah…"

It was a usual action, like always. When Tohka slept, she would unconsciously think of what she was going to do next. Firstly, she needed to

wake up. Next, wash her face. Followed by eating her breakfast, dressing up… yes, and go to school with Shidou.

Today's lunch would also be Shidou's specialty lunches. What would be inside the lunch? It made her excited just by thinking about it.

"Umu… Nnnmu…"

While still in a state of semi-consciousness, when she was about to get up from her bed.

That was when Tohka realized she couldn't move her body as she wished.

"Muu…?"

Trying to rub her wet eyes in order to confirm her surroundings, she realized that her hands were likewise immobilized.

Feeling strange, she lowered her head, and realized that she was sitting on a metallic chair – her limbs were handcuffed by strong handcuff-like objects. There were also small bits on her hands, and electrode-like objects on her head and legs.

"What is… this…?"

Looking closely, she noticed she wasn't wearing her nightgown. Unknown to her when she had changed her clothes, she was instead wearing the school uniform of Raizen High School.

Tohka turned her neck and looked at her surroundings.

This wasn't Tohka's room, and neither was it Shidou's home, but rather, a completely unknown location. It was as big as a high school classroom. However, there were only empty floors and walls. And, as far as she can see, there were no visible windows or doors.

It was an odd room. To make a comparison… it was similar to what was shown on television earlier, a prison used to hold repeat offenders.

"This… where is this…?"

Repeatedly blinking her eyes to awaken herself, to continuously remember what happened.

After a while, Tohka finally remembered what happened before she lost consciousness.

"That's right, I was on the stage of the Tenou Festival…!"

Yes. While fighting with the Spirit Miku, who had summoned her Angel, as well as the controlled Yoshino and the Yamai sisters, a Wizard clad in white armor appeared – while she managed to let Shidou escape, Tohka was defeated by her and lost consciousness.

"So that means, this is…"

A sudden noise interrupted her while she was in the middle of her sentence, and Tohka raised her head immediately.

A rectangular crack had grown in the wall which had been completely empty a moment ago, moving horizontally like a door. Rays of light shot into the dark room, allowing for the scenery outside to be seen.

Following that, a person walked into the room through that door.

Light gold-coloured long hair that was combed upwards, as well as white skin. Contrasting that was the black suit that she wore. Ellen Mathers. The Wizard who fought with Tohka at that time.

"You-!"

The moment she recognized that face, Tohka tucked in her body, preparing to charge at Ellen. However, the metallic cuffs restraining her limbs were too strong, and did not budge.

"Please calm down, Tohka-san. You cannot break those cuffs with your current power."

Ellen said that as though she was consoling Tohka. But her collected attitude of doing things, only served to provoke Tohka further.

"What kind of joke is this! You, what do you want! Release me!"

"After releasing you, what do you plan to do?"

"Isn't it obvious! I'm going to help Shidou!"

Tohka screamed loudly. Indeed. For a long while, Shidou was being chased by Miku's army of people.

But Ellen sighed slightly when she heard Tohka's words.

"Shidou… you mean, Itsuka Shidou? Please relax. We are currently looking into his whereabouts. He will be brought here within a few days"

"Wha…!"

"Also, the troops to attack the Tenguu square are in place. We will launch our attack at daybreak, and capture <Diva>, <Hermit> and <Berserk> all at once . You will be able to see your friends soon."

"You, you bitch! What do you want to do with Shidou?"

"Please relax. We don't intend on using violence – However, if you resist, it is possible that you may lose a limb or two."

"…kuu!"

Listening to Ellen's words, a feeling of familiarity flashed within Tohka's mind in that instant. It was similar to boundless anger and rage. At that moment

, the handcuffs that had held tightly up to that point, made a “mshhhh…” sound , - however.

“Wha…”

Tohka suddenly felt breathless. With a twitch of Ellen’s eyebrows, Tohka’s body was crushed by an unbelievable pressure.

“This, this is –“

The crushing sensation on her body was increased. Tohka let out a pained wail.

There was indeed an impression. It was… when she was sandwiched between AST members, including Origami, a feeling similar to that. However, the severity of both, or more accurately the concentration was of a world’s difference. Her body felt heavy. It was difficult to breathe. Her consciousness became fuzzy.

“Do you understand?”

Ellen said so as she let out a sigh. Instantly, the pressure, as though they were false clouds, vanished. As the air flowed into her almost-deoxygenated lungs, Tohka coughed slightly.

“Ack, ack…”

“My Personal Territory’s level is the strongest among all the Wizards. Please remember that resistance is futile.”

“Ku…”

Tohka stared at Ellen with narrowed eyelids, and tried to use her strength. But at the same time, Ellen's sharp eyes caught her action, and she bit her teeth.

With her powers sealed, Tohka had no way of dealing with Ellen's Personal Territory. Tohka spitefully clenched her fists, as her sole sign of resistance, as she stared at Ellen with narrowed eyelids.

"—alright, let me ask you a few questions."

Ellen pulled out a portion of the wall as a makeshift chair, and sat down as she said so.

Part 3

What initially projected into Origami's eyes, was a sea of white.

After her muddled consciousness was cleared, Origami realized that she was in some sort of building. Next, she realized she was lying down.

"Ah…"

Opening her throat, she made a sound a few seconds later. She slowly raised her hand – white again. It was a bandage that nearly covered her skin.

"O, Origami-san…!?"

Hearing the familiar voice, Origami turned her head back.

Beside the bed that Origami was lying on, was a braided, short girl.

It was her kouhai in the Anti-Spirit Team – AST, Okamine Mikie. Her face was full of tears and mucus, making her look like a wreck.

"Thank, thank goodness… I was wondering what I should do if you were to never wake up…"

"…this is…?"

Origami said so, as she looked at Mikie. Mikie, who had cried her nose red, took the handkerchief by the side of the bed and blew her nose.

"The, the hospital! Origami-san was injured everywhere… and her eyes, ears and nose were all bleeding… I thought you'd never wake up…"

The last sound descended into a sob. Mikie took out the handkerchief again and blew her nose.

"I'm sorry… I'm sorry…, I knew Origami-san was in danger, yet I didn't do anything… if only then I had left the captain and rushed to your side, this wouldn't have happened…!"

Mikie said so as she remorsefully tilted her head. However, Origami shook her head, as if disagreeing.

"There is no need to apologise."

"Eh…?"

Mikie widened her eyes in an instant.

"Regardless of the reason, my actions were in violation of our orders. It must be treated as the selfish actions of one individual, and not the intention of the AST as a whole. Where's Captain Kusakabe?"

"She, she… she's at the base. Negotiating with the superiors about Origami-san…"

"I see."

Origami silently nodded her head. But Mikie twitched her eyebrows, as if she was unable to accept it.

"But, but… if so, then Origami-san would…"

"Captain Kusakabe was correct. If everyone had helped me then, then the entire AST could have been under disciplinary action."

"How… how could it be!"

"That is not impossible. As such, this entire incident is my responsibility, using the <White Licorice> without permission, and the attack on the Third Squadron. They are all my –"

At this moment, Origami's memories cleared as a result of her words.

"…….!"

Origami immediately widened her eyes, and sat up.

No – more accurately, she tried to sit up. At the moment when she applied strength, a pain similar to the cracking of bones and the splitting of muscles spread through Origami's entire body.

"Ku…ah—"

"No, you can't, Origami-san! If you don't rest…!"

"…Shidou, he…"

"Eh?"

"Shidou, is he alright?"

Listening to Origami, Mikie stopped for a while, and kept quiet for a while.

After considering whether to tell Origami, she opened her mouth.

"…we're still in the midst of investigating. We don't know the details yet."

"What is it?"

Listening to Mikie's words, Origami felt mystified.

Mikie looked at Origami worriedly, as she carefully reached out for the remote, and switched on the television. The images on the television, were accompanied by sound coming from the speakers.

It was broadcasting a news program. The chaos on the streets, and the frantic voice of the reporter, compounded the sense of nervousness that the viewers felt .

"The mass rioting that suddenly happened in Tenguu City has no signs of calming down! The riot police sent out to control the situation has joined in on the unnatural phenomenon! What exactly is happening in Tenguu Ci—"

"……! This…"

"It's exactly what you have seen… There's some sort of mass rioting in Tenguu City now. This area's far from the city, and hence is considered safe…"

"What, exactly happened?"

"Although it wasn't publicly announced… it's a Spirit. A large Spirit reading was measured within Tenguu square. All of these people were probably controlled by the Spirit."

"Spirit… if it's a Spirit, why are none of you deployed?"

"Because there isn't a precedent for this, and even the higher-ups were confused… our orders were to standby. I was supposed to be waiting at the base , but I was only allowed to come out after special permission from the Captain… "

Origami slightly twitched her eyebrows, there didn't seem to be a solution.

Regardless, simply by observation there were at least hundreds… maybe thousands that were under the control of the Spirit. Even if DEM were their superiors, and were turning a blind eye to what's happening, the AST had a responsibility, and they couldn't possibly attack without accounting for the civilians.

But what about Shidou. Was he controlled by the Spirit, like the people on-screen? Or…

That was when Origami remembered the face she saw before losing consciousness.

"Mana—"

That's right, a former Wizard of DEM, the estranged younger sister of Shidou. Takamiya Mana, who saved Origami when she was in danger. If it was her, she might have saved Shidou from the mob.

"Mana, where is she?"

"Mana-san…? Ah, right, I was shocked! Although the word was that she was missing… but the one who sent Origami-san to us was Mana-san! But, she was wearing an unknown CR-Unit, and said things like 'we will be enemies the next time we meet', and she just vanished afterwards…"

Mikie said so as her face showed confusion.

As Origami tried to recall, she thought about what she had heard. Mana had indeed mentioned something similar to that. Although the reasons were unknown, she had indeed severed connections to DEM Industries.

"About Shidou, does she not know?"

"Yes… unfortunately."

"…kuu"

Origami sadly squeezed the voice out of her throat, and in order to avoid excess strain on her body, she sat up slowly. However, because of using the powerful armour and enduring a massive attack, her body was weakened and the action simply caused the pain to return.

"I, want…"

Origami clenched her fist, and punched the bed. The bed let out a soft sound, and dust flew from within. She felt helpless. In the end Origami wasn't capable of protecting Shidou. Even if she used <White Licorice> without permission, she still could not achieve her intended effect.

"Shi, dou…" As she called out to the man she loved whose safety was unknown – Origami continued to clench her fist.

Part 4

"It's… here, right?"

"Mm, that's right."

It was nine at night. Shidou and Kurumi stood in a residential area lighted up by the lampposts and the apartments there.

In front of them was a tall, well-crafted metal gate, and a carefully kept garden. And a Western building that would only appear in fairy tales.

This was where Shidou had been once before – Miku Izayoi's home.

There should not be anyone at home, the windows were shut, and the lights were off.

To investigate a Spirit that suddenly appeared, and disappeared as quickly was extremely difficult.

However, the Spirit Miku was an exception.

That was because not only had Miku attended a few months of school in this world, she also had an active profile as a singer. The point was – she was different from other Spirits, and had left many traces of herself in this world.

"Then, let's hurry and begin the investigation."

As she said so, Kurumi raised her right hand.

Accompanying her actions, an old-styled gun flew out from the shadows, and Kurumi held it in her hand. Then she clicked the trigger without hesitation, and with a sharp sound, the lock was shot open.

"Oi, Kurumi!"

"What? Do you mean to say that I shouldn't be this rough?"

"No… even if you have a point, but for a gunshot to suddenly sound in such a quiet district, what would happen if the police were to come!"

"The police, aren't they having their hands tied over the whole rioting?"

Kurumi giggled, and after opening the gate, she ignored Shidou's warning and like before used the gun to shoot open the lock on the door.

"Ah… forget it."

Shidou looked around, and ensuring that nobody was within the surroundings, followed Kurumi into the room.

"Mm, it should be around here somewhere…"

Opening the switch, the chandelier in the room began to glow with a warm brightness.

Within his eyesight, the room was filled with what looked like expensive furniture and materials. Although he had been here once, Shidou was still amazed by the sight before him.

But, now was not the time to daydream. Shidou lightly patted his cheeks, brought himself together, removed his shoes, and entered the house.

"Alright, now, where should we start looking?"

"Mm… yes."

To be honest, there were no apparent leads. The intention was to search thoroughly, but there wasn't that much time now. Shidou tried to recall what happened the last time he was invited in.

"There probably isn't much to look for in the waiting room on the first floor. What's important is probably Miku's bedroom…"

"Is that so, then let's go."

"Mm."

Shidou said so as he followed Kurumi up the stairs.

Miku's bedroom was found rather quickly. After going up the stairs, just as they were going to pass through the corridor, a door with the metal plate " BEDROOM" was right in sight.

"……."

Committing such an immoral act like entering a girl's bedroom without the owner's presence, Shidou initially felt nervous, but realized that he was an idiot for thinking wildly at a time like this. He then turned the handle of the door.

The room was roughly the size of 20 tatamis[7A 1]. Inside the room was a king-sized bed with blankets, and beside the wall was a wooden cabinet and closet. Opposite the bed was an 80-inch television. It was similar to a room in a luxury hotel.

"This really is… incredible"

Shidou couldn't help but smile awkwardly, though he couldn't simply be amazed. Saying an "excuse me", he walked into the room. He opened the ancient cupboards one-by-one, searching. Inside laid jewelry and various small cute objects. –While this was what Kurumi described as "Miku's belongings", but were they even useful?

Then –

"Shidou-san, Shidou-san. Please look over here."

Just as Shidou was silently thinking, Kurumi's voice came from behind him.

"What is it? Did you find something?"

"Mm. I found something incredible."

As she said so, Kurumi pointed to one of the cabinet's closets.

Shidou walked over, and followed the direction which Kurumi pointed in. After seeing the object, Shidou froze.

"Wha…"

Because inside of the closet was full of cute bras and underwear.

"Have a look. The size is so big. I could even put my face in."

As she said so Kurumi took out a light-colored bra, and stretched it with her hands. It did look like it was extremely big. One could probably fit a small watermelon into it.

Shidou was a boy, hence there was no way he would not be interested in the charming object right in front of him, but it was also important to know the circumstances.

Shidou's face reddened and he coughed.

"You, what are you doing…… now's not the time for such antics."

"Ufufu, Shidou-san is so honest. You need to relax your shoulders."

Kurumi smiled as if she was joking, and placed the bra in front of her breasts to try it. While there were clothes covering the outside, there was still a large gap revealed.

"Ara, ara."

"…uu"

…How should it be expressed, against such a wonderful combination, Shidou unwittingly blushed, and hurriedly turned around. But this reaction was apparently observed by Kurumi, and feeling interested, she passed the bra to Shidou.

"Here, why don't Shidou try it now?"

"Ha… what?! Why, why am I…"

"Ara, my apologies. Shiori-san, please try it."

"……kuu"

Against the ridiculous insult, Shidou sighed. Kurumi smiled widely and continued.

"While I saw you on the stage, but I haven't had the chance to see Shiori-san in person. I was thinking I should have a look." "Don't, don't joke around. I don 't want to be like that again…"

Shidou unwittingly retreated. However Kurumi closed in as if to fill the gap.

"Why are you so against it. You won't get affected by it."

"Yes! Yes it would! My time and my dignity!"

"Please don't say such unpleasant words. It'll just be for a while? I just want to see Shiori-san's cute face, that look of embarrassment and shame as she trembles…"

"What are you trying to do!? Don't do anything strange to Shiori-chan!"

"What wrong is there in doing so? What wrong is there in doing so?"

Kurumi said so, as she approached Shidou step by step. But she tripped on the carpet, and lost her balance, falling forward.

"—ara"

"Uu, uwah!"

As though it was a set up, Shido fell down as well. And unluckily for him, so did the cupboard behind him.

There was a clattering sound, and the back of his brain and his back went through intense pain. Shido laid down as he twitched his eyebrows.

"Ouch …… Kurumi, are you alright?"

"Mm, I'm alright. Because Shido-san saved me."

That said, as though entrusting herself to Shido, Kurumi laughed wildly as she unnecessarily increased her weight on Shido. Crushed by Kurumi's lean but soft body, Shido's shoulders trembled.

"Oi, oi, Kurumi……"

"Ara, Shido-san."

Kurumi suddenly raised her eyebrows, and looked at Shido's face.

"You're hurt."

"Eh? Ah. I am."

Shido touched his cheek, and there was a sensation of pain. His fingernail was stained with some blood. It seemed like he hit something when he fell down .

"Ah, this isn't a problem. I'll just lick the wound."

"Hm, I see"

"Ah, on that note, can you move away?"

Shidou said so as he tried to get up, but was prevented by Kurumi pinning him to the ground with greater force.

"Kurumi?"

"Please, don't move."

Kurumi spread her legs, riding on Shido's body, placing her hand on Shido's shoulders, and slowly approached his face.

"Wha, what are you doing, Kurumi!?"

Against Shido's cries, Kurumi smiled softly. Her breathing caused Shido's ears and nostrils to itch, and his heartbeat to race.

Shido's body was thus trapped, as Kurumi slowly opened her soft lips, showing her moist tongue inside.

And then she proceeded to lick on the wound on Shido's face. An indescribable feeling spread throughout Shido's body, causing Shido's consciousness to snap.

"! Wha, whawhawhawha, what are you doing?"

"Ufufu, didn't you say it'd be fine if there's saliva on it?"

"No, no, that was worded wrongly…"

Even if Shido said so, Kurumi smiled softly, and licked at Shido's face again, before finally moving her face away.

The saliva connecting Kurumi's tongue to Shido's face was shining brightly. Looking at this seductive sight in front of him, Shido felt his cheeks burning.

Kurumi smiled as she removed herself from on top of Shido's body. Shido stood up after he managed to calm down his rapid breaths.

Looking back, there was a beautiful hole in the cupboard. This would need to be compensated for.

"How troublesome. I was trying to leave no prints…"

Then.

"Hm…….?"

It had probably dropped due to the impact earlier, and as he looked at the unfamiliar rectangular tin, Shido twitched his eyebrows.

It was a tin meant to contain desserts or cakes. While it was true that people do store objects inside. But this didn't match up with the extravagant space within the tin.

"This is……"

Shido opened the box in a curious manner – he then widened his eyes.

Inside, were plastic boxes meant to contain CDs. Each of them had Miku's picture imprinted onto it. From the looks of it, they were Miku's music albums.

"She had that many songs… eh?"

Shido felt confused upon looking at the CD.

The name written underneath the song was not Miku's.

" 'Yoimachi Tsukino'? Whose name is this?"

In an instant, it was assumed that this was Miku's stage name, yet Tonomachi and the others address Miku as Izayoi Miku. It wouldn't be wrong to have a musical career under Miku's name.

Besides, Miku was a mysterious idol who only presented herself to secret concerts limited to female fans. But the name that was so boldly written on the CD album was completely unheard of.

"What is this…"

"What's the matter?"

"Um, this is…"

Shido vaguely replied, as he removed the CD from the plastic case, and inserted it into the VCR that was beside him.

What followed was a melody of a song with a rapid tempo, followed by Miku's voice.

"Ara ara, this is a really good song."

As she said so, Kurumi followed the beat with her fingers.

However, Shido felt uncomfortable with the voice.

"This is… Miku's voice?"

Of course, there would be the difference between a live performance and a playback from a CD… but before that, to say Miku's voice was younger, or not similar to the current Miku, it possessed a mysterious quality that could sway people.

In contrast, this song had a feeling that was one of truly singing, charming enough to invigorate an audience.

"Um –hm…"

Shido felt suspicious though he couldn't tell what it is. He looked through the CD album in sequence.

"Ah? This is…"

At the end, there was an object.

"A photograph…?"

Indeed, in the beautiful frame, was a photograph.

There was nothing peculiar with the photograph, but,

"…eh?"

Shido's heart had a strange feeling, as he widened his eyes.

Strange – he kept feeling a sense of unease.

Shido took the photograph in his hand again and stared at it intently.

It wasn't to memorise important information within the photograph, neither was it because the photograph was edited. There was nothing peculiar with the photograph. But, this. This was a photograph that normally should not have existed.

"In that case… this…"

Shido raised his eyebrows and lowered his voice.

He placed his hand on his forehead, and continued to think – he managed to come up with a theory.

A theory that was disproved by Kotori. But, if this theory was correct, the reason for this photo's existence – and that of the CD earlier would be explained.

"But, if so, then why…"

While Shido was busy staring intently at the photo, a white arm reached out from beneath his armpit, and snatched the photo away with a sound. Needless to say, the offender was Kurumi.

"This seems extremely interesting; please let me borrow it for a while."

Kurumi then took the photograph and the remaining CD in one hand, and raised her other hand. Then, an old-fashioned gun flew out from the shadows, as Kurumi held it in her hand.

"<Emperor of Time (Zafkiel)> – Tenth Bullet (Yutzudo)!"

As Kurumi said so, a portion of the shadow shone with a glamour with the shape of an "X" sign, and seemingly from within the shadows, it was absorbed by the barrel of the gun.

Then Kurumi, for some reason, placed the photograph and CD next to her head, and placed the gun on top of it. It was as though using a bullet to keep the photograph and CD in place.

Just as Shido became confused at Kurumi's strange actions, she unflinchingly activated the trigger. The "Tenth Bullet (Yutzudo)" that was shot from the barrel pierced the CD, the photograph, and Kurumi's head.

"Ku, Kurumi!?"

Just as he finished, Shido felt something was amiss. Not mentioning Kurumi's head, the photograph and CD that were supposedly pierced by the bullet were all intact.

"Ufufu, it's alright. The ability of the "Tenth Bullet (Yutzudo)" is to recall. The targets that were hit will have its past memories sent to my brain."

"Past… memories?"

Kurumi confirmed in a low tone as she looked at the CD and the photograph .

"I see—so that was it. Though it wasn't continuous, but this can allow us to understand what the feeling of discomfort that she gave off was."

"Wha, what do we understand!?"

"Mm, from the looks of it Miku—"

Kurumi was going to continue.

The glass panels vibrated slightly, followed by a large sound outside.

"What, an alarm…!?"

Shido widened his eyes, but immediately realized this was not the sharp sound of the alarms that he had heard.

—it was music.

The regal music that was played with a giant organ, and the beautiful voice that could enslave audiences, the music that was played was circulating around the streets. At the instant he heard the music, Shido felt a familiar feeling of dizziness. He pressed his ears in an attempt to stay conscious.

"This is—Miku's…!"

Indeed. It was the unrivalled performance by the spirit – Izayoi Miku, and her angel <Army-Breaker Gabriel Diva>.

But, looking out of the window, there wasn't the sign of the giant Angel. It was most likely that the button for the emergency public announcement system had been pressed… or a campaign vehicle was making its rounds. But it was already proven that Miku's performance was effective, even when transmitted through mechanical objects.

If so, the nearby residents would become Miku's devoted fans, and begin to capture Shido.

"……!"

Shido turned around to look at Kurumi. But—like Shido, Miku's music had no effect on Kurumi's consciousness.

Even so, the situation was worsening. Because Miku, frustrated from trying to find Shido, was busy increasing her range of support.

"Ara ara, this is really too much"

Kurumi felt amused by the situation, but as though feeling annoyed by it somehow, held her chin with her hand.

"There isn't a choice now, I will explain to you on the way."

Then Kurumi continued.

"Even now, I'm just assisting you. Regardless, I will help you to prepare the stage. But, the one to deal the decisive blow, has to be Shido-san."

"Eh……?"

Shido widened his eyes – but quickly understood Kurumi's intentions, and clenched his fist.

"Please help me, Kurumi – let's have a talk with that disobedient girl"

"It will be my pleasure"

As Kurumi said so, she curtsied like before.

Part 5

"_____ "

In the central stage of the Tengu square, spread a wave of excitement.

That was because a giant glowing organ was standing upright in the middle of the stage – <Army-Breaker Diva>. In front of it stood Miku in her Astral Dress, playing the glowing keys of the organ, while singing loudly.

Gabriel

The audience who had became Miku's loyal fans, watched as though she was a goddess. There were also occasions where people fainted from the moving music.

Because the men were all moved out of the square, and were serving as bouncers, the audience within Miku's line of sight were all women. They were all waving purple glowsticks, squealing at Miku's every movement.

On that note, the current performance was currently being broadcasted live throughout the town through the public announcement speakers that were set up throughout the town. With this, the people who have heard the music would become Miku's new underlings, searching for that terrible man.

"……uu"

The terrible memories of a few hours ago glimpsed through her mind, Miku unknowingly twitched.

The performance coincidentally ended at that point, and the square was instantly filled with a thundering applause.

If it was like usual, this would be the moment when she felt a great sense of accomplishment. But right now she was feeling annoyed because that man's face constantly appeared in her mind. Miku held a look of unhappiness, as she neared the unused microphone.

"…I'm tired, I'll like to rest. You're free to move about until the next performance."

The square was then filled with voices of disappointment. But Miku didn't seem to be slightly bothered, as she returned backstage.

"Whoo…"

Letting her Angel play non-stop in order to expand her area of control, it is indeed extremely tiring. Lightly sighing, she combed her sweat-stained hair upwards.

"You look tired…onee-sama, please, use… this…"

A timid voice said towards Miku. Looking there, it was a short girl wearing a maid outfit, holding out a towel towards Miku. It was a girl who had been enslaved by Miku's concert today – Yoshino.

With wave-like hair, irises as beautiful as sapphire. A girl whom people can't resist to tightly hug like a doll. Due to the extra uniforms in the exhibition division's maid café, she was ordered to try on one of them… it was a perfect fit. Miku hugged her irresistibly.

"Ah, it's so cute! I can't resist! I can't resist!"

"Ah, ah…! Onee-sama…!?"

["Wow! Miku-chan's unexpectedly bold~"]

Yoshino hurriedly confirmed her surroundings, as squeals came from the puppet on her right hand, [Yoshinon].

She initially wondered why there was a puppet…after listening to their conversation she understood that it was Yoshino's irreplaceable friend, and Yoshino's ventriloquism was too cute to pass up.

After enjoying the sensation of hugging the irresistible Yoshino, Miku kissed her on the cheek, and released Yoshino. Hence Yoshino's face flushed up instantly.

"Thank you Yoshino-san. Thank you for getting it for me specially."

"Th, that... ye, yes'

Yoshino lowered her face that was as red as a lantern, and held out her right arm that had the towel.

Miku thanked her as she accepted it, wiping away her perspiration. Then again, a portion of it had already been wiped when she hugged Yoshino.

Miku looked at Yoshino again, as a satisfied smile appeared on her face.

Yoshino, was more than a simple, cute girl.

The Spirit of water and coldness – <Hermit>. That was Yoshino's codename.

A Spirit. That's right. Similar to Miku, an existence that possesses power beyond human comprehension.

"Ufu… I'm really lucky. Who would have thought there was a Spirit in the square"

Yes, it was a coincidence that Yoshino heard Miku's song.

To think that in such a short time, a Spirit would become one of her possessions. Besides –

"Kuku, you've worked hard, aneue-sama[7A 2]. Please rest up."

"Incitement. Please come here, onee-sama."

Miku turned around, as there stood two girls similarly dressed in maid outfits.

They were two girls with identical looks, instantly making others wonder if they were standing in front of a mirror. But looking closely, both still possessed their own individual characteristics.

With speech as eloquent as acting and a determined face, as well as a lean figure – Kaguya. With a vague tone and expression, as well as a figure with similar proportions to that of Miku's – Yuzuru.

The two of them were similar to Miku, and Yoshino. They were existences known as Spirits.

They were also in the status of devotion to Miku. In order to treat the hardworking Miku, they have prepared a chair and refreshments in the restroom.

"Fufu, thank you very much"

Miku gracefully smiled, as she was persuaded to sit on the chair by the duo. At the same time Kaguya gently massaged Miku's shoulders, while Yuzuru knelt beside Miku, holding out a glass filled with a drink.

Miku tilted her head and used the straw to drink the beverage. The taste of the fruit spread in her mouth.

"Mm, this drink is delicious"

"Elation. It is my pleasure"

"Hold, hold it! Why are you only talking to Yuzuru. Are you not satisfied by my skills!?"

Kaguya who had been massaging Miku's shoulders complained loudly. Feeling that Kaguya was simply too cute, Miku couldn't help but giggle.

"My apologies, it wasn't like that. Kaguya's massages are very comfortable, as though I'm in heaven"

"Kuku… then, that'd be great"

Listening to Miku, Kaguya kept quiet with a "ku nong" sound. That was cute too, as Miku giggled again.

Then, as though she was worried Miku would be snatched away by the Yamai sisters, Yoshino hurriedly looked around, and took a large fan by the side to slowly fan Miku with.

"Thank you very much Yoshino-chan. It's comfortable"

"Ah, that… this, thank, thank you…!"

Yoshino nodded her head in both embarrassment and happiness.

"Aaa…"

Miku let out an enchanting voice.

--This is a place of immeasurable happiness.

On Miku's stage, the fans waiting for her to sing. And, the extremely beautiful girls wholeheartedly attending to Miku.

It was simply amazing, to the point of making Miku wonder if she was dreaming. In actuality Miku had already pulled her cheeks several times. Needless to say, it hurt.

Her dream, was hence fulfilled. There was nobody to stop Miku.

However—

"…ku"

As the bad memories went through her mind again, Miku's face became one of anger.

--Itsuka Shiori. It was due to remembering that name and face.

"I won't forgive you… Shiori-san…"

Miku said in a low tone due to the hate stirring in her heart. The tone was frightening enough, for Yoshino and the Yamai sisters to hold their breaths.

A few weeks ago before the Tenryu Festival, Miku met that girl who was the committee member of Raizen High School – Shiori.

Saying she was part of the netball club, a tall girl with strong, muscular arms. Even using speech that would be considered unrefined for a girl… that's right. A girl that gave Miku a different feeling compared to the other girls around her.

In actuality, truthfully speaking, Miku was very interested in her. It could even be said as infatuation.

--yet, the ending that Miku was hoping for, was a complete betrayal.

"Uu, uu…"

Thinking about that scene that was still fresh in her mind, a nauseating feeling washed over Miku. She immediately used her hand to cover her mouth.

"O, onee-sama…!"

"Are you alright, aneue-sama…!"

"Terror, someone quickly go and get a bag"

The trio said so hurriedly. Miku stopped them with an "I'm fine…", and clenched her teeth.

At that moment, that strange feeling when she touched Shiori's crotch.

And seeing for herself that horrible thing between Shiori's legs.

That's right… Itsuka Shiori, she is the one thing Miku hated most in this world – a man.

"I won't forgive you… I won't forgive you…! How dare you play with my feelings…!"

Miku put her hands together as though she was pressing her shaking shoulders, with her wrists making squeezing sounds.

The things done while under the impression that Shiori was a girl, flashed before her eyes like a soumatou[7A 3]. At this point, Miku began to have goosebumps over her whole body.

The Miku who had achieved her ideal world, had one last regret. To get that man, the person who is not Itsuka Shiori but Itsuka Shido to be right in front of her, and torture him to the point, that he would regret ever being born, would be the only way of releasing that anger.

"That man… has he been found yet?"

Listening to Miku's enraged voice, Yoshino trembled slightly.

"Ye, yes, …that, we… we're still looking…"

"Is that so… then hurry and find—"

At that instant when Miku gave her orders, the door of the restroom opened with a "pong", and three girls in maid outfits similar to Yoshino walked in.

"Sorry for interrupting! Onee-sama!"

"There's an emergency! Onee-sama!"

"We have a problem! Onee-sama!"

The girls spoke in order of height.

They were the Raizen students who had originally formed a team with Shido for the performance. From the right, they are Ai, Mai, Mii.

"You seem pretty hurried , what is it"

After being questioned by Miku, the trio confirmed with each other before speaking together.

"We, we have a problem! We found Itsuka-kun!"

"…what did you say?"

After listening to the report, Miku's line of sight narrowed momentarily—

Before an unstoppable laughter came out from her mouth.

"Fufu… fufufufufufufufufu… so, we've finally got him"

As she said so, she stood up from her chair.

"It was much harder than I expected. Fufufu, but that's useless. You can't escape from my lovely subordinates. –by the way, who found him? If it's a girl, I 'm going to spoil her for a while. Bring her here in a while. If it's a man… mm, just give him a konbeito[7A 4] to encourage him."

But, after listening to Miku. The troubled Ai Mai Mii trio looked at each other.

"? What is it? Ha, was it a demon who found him…?"

"No, no, that's not what it is…"

"How do I put this, it's that there're too many people who found him…"

"Or to put it that he doesn't have anywhere to hide…"

Because of their vague speech, Miku frowned.

"What exactly are you all saying? Didn't you say that the target was found?"

"Yes, yes"

"That's right"

"There's no mistake!"

The three of them nodded their heads together.

"Then there isn't a problem then, isn't there? Where is he?"

"He's… in a place that's near here"

"To be precise, right in front of Tenguu square"

"What, what do we do…"

"…eh?"

Miku widened her eyes, and let out a surprised sound.

Chapter 7: The Battlefield of Only Two People

Part 1

Rewind to a few minutes ago.

Shidou and Kurumi have returned to the surroundings of the large-scale convention centre located in the middle of Tenguu City: the Tenguu Square.

The stage of the Tenguu Festival, the cultural festival organized by ten different schools, was also the location where the revolution had happened.

Then – now it is the fortress of the Spirit: Izayoi Miku.

"It is the main base all right, there are so many people…"

Shidou said so in a low tone while looking down at the ground from the rooftop of a building near the Tenguu Square. While it was true that he would not be discovered from that distance, there was no need to intentionally speak loudly.

In the darkness, at the lit up, bone chilling entrance, a large number of people poured out from inside.

At this moment, upon sensing the noise of the speakers nearby, he immediately looked for a place to hide.

A news helicopter bearing the name of a TV station flew in the air. It must have arrived to cover the unprecedented rioting… however, it was likely that even the pilot and reporter were being controlled after listening to Miku's performance. From earlier, it was flying at an extremely low altitude around the plaza, as though to survey the area.

Although it is unclear to what extent was Miku's range of control, but up to the point where Shidou and Kurumi had arrived at the plaza, the streets were filled with the citizens controlled by Miku, as though it was a scene from a horror film.

In reality, they were almost caught a few times. Without Kurumi, Shidou would have most likely been caught and sent to Miku.

"Even though we had barely made it here… now, what should we do next?"

Looking at the crowd below, Shidou's forehead began to sweat profusely.

"The main entrance is already this crowded, and the other entrances are likely to be heavily guarded. Even if we try to enter from the top, there are still helicopters surveying the area…"

"What are you saying, Shidou-san. Is there a need to think through all of that "

Noticing Shidou's troubled expression, Kurumi said so in a dismissive tone.

"Do you have an idea?"

"Mm, of course. I'll make sure Shidou-san gets to Miku-san - But, what happens afterwards will depend on Shidou-san's actions."

"...is that really possible?"

"Ara, you don't believe me? This is saddening. I feel like crying"

As she said so, Kurumi faked a crying expression as she covered her face with her hands.

"Oi, oi…"

"If you don't want me to cry, you can either give me one of Shidou-san's eyeballs, or let me suck your blood, or pet my head."

"...here, don't cry"

Without any room for choice, Shidou moved his hand to the top of Kurumi's blood red headdress, and began to caress Kurumi's hair. Kurumi then finally smiled happily.

"Alright, we are leaving. If we delay any further, the situation may worsen."

"..."

Shidou stared with his eyes half-open at the cause of the delay, but in order to avoid further trouble, he decided not to push the matter.

"...but, what do we do? There are so many people watching the area…"

"Hehe, hehe, this is simple."

Kurumi laughed scarily, before standing up - and carried Shidou.

"Eh --?"

"Alright, let's go"

As she said so, she walked to the edge of the roof while carrying Shidou.

And then without hesitation, she jumped down the roof.

"Uu, uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa--!?"

The two of them dropped from a ten-storey high building, from a height of over 300 metres. Without any mental preparation, Shidou screamed as though he forgot about the enemies surrounding them.

After a sense of weightlessness similar to dancing in the air, there was an indescribable feeling of landing on the ground. The moment Kurumi's feet touched the ground, a thick shadow appeared on the surface, absorbing most of the impact of the fall.

"Ara ara, Shidou-san. What's with the noise?"

"Don't, don't mention it, just let me down…"

"Ufufu, there's no problem for me carrying you like this"

As Kurumi said so, she let Shidou stand upright.

And then, in the next instant, Shidou and Kurumi were captured by some spotlights with a "PA!"

It was to be expected. Screaming so loudly in front of prepared enemies. It was basically trying to attract attention to himself.

"Damn it…"

Shidou looked at his surroundings.

People. People. People. And more people.

There were at least several thousand enemies.

And including himself, there were just two people on their side.

There wasn't a suitable phrase to describe, the landslide advantage that presented a despairing difference in strength.

And the people here, all looked at Shidou with a murderous intent. No matter how courageous a person, he is bound to be daunted at such a sight.

"Ara, shouting would remind them the purpose of their existence, that is you , Shidou-san."

"Who do you think caused this, who do you think…"

Looking at the relaxed Kurumi, Shidou shouted.

But, now is not the time to do this.

It is unknown if they were observing, or awaiting Miku's instructions. The bouncers didn't hurry over. However, they were also increasingly surrounding their range. It was as though they were surrounding the cornered Shidou and Kurumi, into a semicircle.

In the front of the squad, were extremely strong men, as well as armed policemen.

And then, at this instant.

"--So you dare to return to my castle, you sure are confident. Shiori-san… no, Itsuka Shidou…"

The sound rang throughout the Tenguu Square. It was through the speakers. There was no mistake it was Izayoi Miku's voice. By the looks of it, the news of Shidou's appearance has already been sent over.

"Miku…!"

Shidou unwittingly said her name. Of course, the voice here could not be transmitted to the interior of the square. Miku continued without changing her tone.

"While I do not know what do you want, but since you're here I cannot possibly let you escape right? Alright, everyone, catch him.

It's alright if he suffers a bit, but please try to treat him nicely - otherwise I won't be able to make him suffer"

Leaving a chilling phrase, and with a "phwoosh", Miku cut the line.

What replaced the noise were the resounding voices of Miku's followers.

[UWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO--]

"Uu, uwaaaaaa…!"

As though their restraints were removed, the crowd began charging at Shidou and Kurumi. Having tried to maintain some semblance of courage so far, Shidou couldn't help but cower at the sudden force.

"Ku, Kurumi! This is too dangerous! We have to flee!"

But Kurumi was not moved by it, and stood her ground.

This was to be expected when one thought about it. Shidou's group was completely surrounded by a numerous crowd, without room for escape.

"Ku…!"

Everything ends now. The man leading the charge, reached his hand out at the cornered Shidou--

At the moment he was about to touch Shidou, there was a sudden sound, and he was sucked towards the ground by an unknown force.

"Eh…?"

Shidou let out a surprised noise -- and immediately pressed his knees.

Seeing the moment when the men were sucked into the ground. A strong sense of tiredness washed over him.

"This, this is…"

Shidou used his entire body's weight, before being able to maintain the posture he had before, squeezing out a noise.

Looking in front, the men that had surrounded Shidou, were all on the floor, in painful moans.

And then, the surroundings that were supposed to be lighted by the street lights, were surrounded by a layer of darkness.

This was a familiar feeling. That's right. Three months ago - during the period Kurumi attended school, Shidou had experienced it before. [7B 1]

"<City of Devouring Time> …?"

"- Uhe, hehehe. That's right. It's good that you remember it, Shidou-san."

Kurumi twisted her lips, as she looked at Shidou. The left eye that was emblazoned with a clock, was quickly ticking backwards.

<City of Devouring Time>. Every time she uses her Angel's abilities, Kurumi will have to use up some of her own [Time]. This is how she replenish her [Time]. Letting the people who stepped into her shadow enter a comatose state, absorbing their [Time] - that is, their life.

"While it's also tiring to spread my shadow through a large area, ufufu, there really aren't much opportunities to absorb so many people's [Time]. So let me make good use of all of you"

"Kurumi, you dare to do such dangerous things…!"

"Ara ara, are you saying it's better to be captured?"

"Ku…"

Shidou painfully bit his teeth as he walked forward.

"Be… merciful…"

"Mm, mm. I know. With such a large amount, although everybody is affected, on average everybody's time won't be heavily affected. There should still be enough time left for everyone"

"..."

There was nothing left except to believe her words. With heavy footsteps, Shidou passed the collapsed followers.

Part 2

"What, what's that…?!"

In the control room of the Tenguu Square, looking at the displays on the wall . Miku couldn't help but let out a cry at the unbelievable sight.

The display displayed the images sent from a closed-circuit television installed outside the room. Yes, Miku was on the special seat, being clustered by a group of cute Spirits, while thinking about the result of that despicable man being captured.

But the followers who had charged at Shidou upon Miku's orders, all fell to the ground. And then, Shidou and the dressed girl simply continued on without resistance.

"That girl… don't tell me, she's also a Spirit…?"

She squinted her eyes and looked at the girl on the display.

With this scenario, this could be the only possibility. It must have been that man, Shidou who had foreseen this, and left a Spirit by his side. How insidious! Miku remorsefully clenched her fist.

"Besides, she didn't seem controlled by my performance… fuu, this is annoying"

Having being able to reach here, meant that the girl wouldn't be able to be controlled by her, even if she hears her performance. Yoshino and the Yamai siblings had become her own slaves… even if it was a Spirit, Miku's songs should have been similarly effective… could it have been that the girl had the same ability as Shidou?

But, while she thought so, Shidou and the mysterious girl had already entered the Tenguu Square. At this rate they will quickly arrive at Miku.

--to seal her powers.

"...ku, how can I… let you get away with this…"

Miku clenched her fist, and muttered.

Yes, Miku will not have her Spirit abilities be taken away from her.

--Because, if this power, this [Voice] were to disappear--

"I would… be returning, to, that, time…"

Miku quickly shook her head, and stood up from her chair. Kaguya, who had been massaging Miku's shoulders, widened her eyes in shock.

"Ane, aneue-sama? What is it?"

"I'm returning to the stage now! Come with me! --I'm, going to resume the performance!"

Part 3

"Ugu…"

Walking through the stacked crowd of fallen people, it was actually a tiring thing. Shidou battled with his occasional feeling of nausea as he tiptoed, following Kurumi closely.

Even if one were to put it nicely, it was hard to say that it was an easy path, but there was nobody to interfere with Shidou's group. In a while, Shidou and Kurumi had arrived at the entrance of the central stage.

"Come, Shidou-san"

"Alright…!"

Shidou responded to Kurumi's instruction, as he opened the doors in one breath.

"...uu"

The central stage was filled with a strange air. While the seats were filled with girls - after the intrusion of Kurumi's shadow, they were all lying on the ground.

And then, in the deepest part of the stage.

She was there.

With her back against a large organ-like Angel, a girl in an Astral Dress, stood there leisurely.

Izayoi Miku. The Spirit that controls music and sound - and the master of the place, at this moment.

And beside her, with the limited Astral Dresses on their maid outfits, each with their own Angels: Yoshino and the Yamai sisters.

"Miku!"

At the same time Shidou called her name, Miku sighed loudly.

"What kind of noise is that. Can you please not use such unclean sounds to pollute mine and my Spirits' eardrums? What an appalling man. You're the bane of the world. To use an analogy, your vileness would mean that even if you were beaten to death and buried, that patch of soil will never ever be fertile again due to the eternal curse you casted on it. Shut up, you walking piece of trash."

"...ku"

Shidou frowned, having been scolded in such a cavalier tone.

But this was not the time to cower due to such trivialities. Shidou opened his mouth again.

"Miku! Listen to me! I have to go and help Tohka - that girl who was abducted then! So-!"

"Didn't I tell you… to SHUT UPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP--!"

Miku shouted loudly, and her crossed arms immediately burst open.

And then as though to cover her hands, a radiant keyboard appeared.

"<Army-Breaker Gabriel Diva> – [Song of March Advance]!"

And then, her fingers began to play vigorously on the keyboard.

An invigorating, upbeat tune rang through the plaza.

In an instant, the girls who had collapsed in the audience, stood up, as though they were puppets controlled by a string.

"This, this is…"

Shidou turned and looked at Kurumi. However, the minute hand on her left eye was still rapidly turning backwards. This meant that Kurumi had yet to disengage her <City of Devouring Time>. As though to prove this point, Kurumi widened her eyes in surprise, letting out an "Ara ara".

"This is surprising. Mere humans who can still move after entering my shadow"

"Ufufufu, how is that, good enough? My <Army-Breaker Gabriel Diva> isn't just for letting people become fanatical over me"

Miku, as though to flaunt her victory, began to play even more vigorously.

"Alright - I won't waste any more time saying things like 'get him'. My beautiful girls! Come to me! Execute this man in front of me!"

Following Miku's voice, the thousand girls on the audience seat turned to Shidou immediately.

"Ku…!"

His body froze at the spot, Shidou's face revealed a painful expression.

- But at the instant they came at Shidou.

"Hehe, not yet, not yet. If you thought you have won"

Kurumi's mouth curved into the shape of a crescent moon, as her shadow covered the whole area.

"Because, no matter how much you fortify these girls - they are no match for [me]"

"Wha…!?"

Miku's shocked voice came from the stage. But this was to be expected.

Tenguu Square, central stage. From every corner where Miku had covered the area with her voice, multiple Kurumis appeared, and began to restrain the girls' hands, legs and bodies.

"--!?"

Seeing this unusual sight, it wasn't just Miku, even Shidou was at a loss for words. It wasn't the first time Kurumi had cloned herself… but because they were on the school's rooftop then, there weren't this amount that appeared.

However, Shidou immediately turned towards Kurumi.

"Kurumi!"

"I understand, I won't kill them"

Kurumi sensed Shidou's thoughts, and cut in ahead of him.

"What, what is this! What's going on…!"

As though to reply to Miku's shriek, multiple Kurumis that grew out from the walls, floor and seats began to giggle softly. A creepy voice spread from

everywhere. It was like an insane mangaka's work, extremely detached and illogical.

But, to say that Miku's side would be suppressed -- that would be a big mistake.

"<Knight of Winds (Raphael)> – [Piercer (El Rem)]!"

"Responding. <Knight of Winds (Raphael)> – [Constrictor (El Nahash)]"

In that instant, the voices came from above, followed by a large sound, and a gigantic gust of wind.

"Kuaaaaaaaa…!"

Shidou's body was carried away by the overwhelming gust, smashing against the wall of the auditorium.

But -- it strangely did not hurt. That was because Kurumi, who had appeared from within the wall, had gently received Shidou.

"Sor, sorry, Kurumi… is it alright for me to address you like this?"

"Ufufu, please don't worry. Before getting eaten by us, Shidou-san should first take good care of his body."

"...ah, I see"

He felt slightly conflicted by this, though this was not the time to bother about such details. Shidou stood on the ground, looking at the two girls that were flying towards the sky from the stage.

"Kaguya, Yuzuru…!"

The twin Spirits with Astral Dresses on their maid outfits, with a single wing on their backs, struck an offensive pose against Shidou, wielding a gigantic lance and pendulum. Even if it was one of Kurumi's clones, there was no way she can subdue a Spirit who has manifested an Angel.

"So the unrepentant fool returns again! Kuu, and you're using such strange tactics! I will not forgive those who dare to harm aneue-sama, regardless of who he is! Disappear now, if you don't want to go to hell!"

"Warning. This is your last chance. Disappear immediately. If you dare to cross swords with us again, Shidou-san, we will have to get rid of you."

Kaguya and Yuzuru silently stood in the air, glaring at Shidou. They weren't joking, neither were they playing a prank. Their piercing gaze conveyed a stance of hostility.

"O, onee-sama… I won't let you harm her…!"

Similarly, Yoshino, on the large rabbit-shaped Angel that was on the stage -- <Frozen Puppet (Zadkiel)>, widened the freezing border, separating Miku from Kurumi's clones.

"Fu, fufu… I see. Right now, I have three very very cute Spirits to deal with you…! I won't lose to you!"

Listening to this, the Kurumis in the auditorium began to laugh together.

"Kihihi, hehe" "Hehehehehe" "Aha, aha" "That's right, Spirit-san" "As an opponent…" "Without an Angel…" "It might be" "slightly difficult…" [7B 2]

The voice sounded like a wind that had passed a dense forest, as it continued sounding. It was enough to unnerve Yoshino and the Yamai siblings, with a face of displeasure.

Kurumi slowly raised a hand, and called out that name in a sing-song manner.

"--come, come, come to me, <Emperor of Time (Zafkieeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeel)>! For these Spirits who do not know their limits, let us show them the wrongs of their ways!"

In an instant. As though to cover the entrance of the stage, a golden clock rose from the ground. On a gigantic keyboard that was several times taller than Kurumi, an ancient rifle and pistol each served as the hands of a clock.

"An, Angel…"

Shidou looked at the clock and began to mutter as though he was daydreaming. <Emperor of Time[Zafkiel]>. The Angel without peer that controls time.

Kurumi twisted the corner of her mouth due to Shidou's words. She opened her hands with a "PA!". Following these actions, two handguns flew from the clock, and into Kurumi's hands.

Following that, Kurumi said to Shidou, as though she was whispering.

"Alright. Shidou-san. Are you ready"

"Eh? Ready…"

"From now, you will be alone with Miku-san. Please try to convince her. It's best if you could change her mind. If not, please make a deal with her, to not interfere with us until we rescue Tohka-san"

As Kurumi said so, she winked and kissed her gun.

"<Emperor of Time[Zafkiel]>-- [The First Bullet[Aleph]]!"

At the same time, a shadow seeped out from the "I" on the clock, and was sucked into the muzzle of Kurumi's gun.

Simultaneously, gun-wielding Kurumis began to appear in the auditorium, and began to shoot at the airborne Yamai sisters.

"Ku… this is annoying! Yuzuru!"

"Acknowledgement. Kaguya, give me your hand"

Kaguya and Yuzuru both held each other's hand, and using it as a center of gravity, began to spin in the air.

As such they used this momentum to whip up a strong whirlwind, easily blowing away the pitch black bullets that were shot by the Kurumis.

"Kukakakaka! Do you think such tricks will work against us, the children of gales?"

"Easy. These attacks are like peashooters in the face of Yuzuru's winds"

The Yamai sisters exclaimed loudly. While the Kurumis continued to fire the bullets, they were all blocked by the wall of gales around Kaguya and Yuzuru.

However, the real Kurumi standing in front of <Emperor of Time Zafkiel>, began to giggle at the situation.

Holding her gun, she then turned towards the Kurumi that was carrying Shidou.

"Then, it's up to you now, [me]"

"Mm, I understand, [me]"

After talking, a black bullet was shot towards the Shidou-carrying Kurumi between her eyebrows.

However, Shidou understood that that was not a bullet meant to kill. The power of [Aleph] was--

"Uwaa…….!"

Shidou was silenced by the sudden incoming impact.

He was soon subject to the attacks of the Yamai sisters--no. Kurumi's clone, carrying Shidou, quickly weaved her way through the Yamai sisters, running towards the stage that Miku was on.

"Wha--"

"Horror. This--"

The air was soon filled with Kaguya and Yuzuru's shocked voices. While she was carrying Shidou, it was still possible to observe the hastened Kurumi's actions with the power of [The First Aleph Bullet]. It was a scary sight.

But, the Yamai sisters' reflexes were slowed due to being assaulted by bullets everywhere. As they were panicking, Kurumi and Shidou had already arrived onto the stage.

"...!"

[Wow! Wo-wow!]

Yoshino and <Frozen Puppet Zadkiel>, who were on the stage, had began to panic due to the events that occurred earlier. To protect Miku from the enemy that had suddenly appeared, Yoshino created an ice barrier.

However, in that instant a number of Kurumis began to fly towards <Frozen Puppet Zadkiel> as though they were missiles.

"Kehehehehehehehehe!"

"Ki, kya….!"

[No way! What are you guys doing--!]

Yoshino moved her hands, allowing for <Frozen Puppet Zadkiel>'s body to lean backwards. At the same time, the moisture in the air around her began to form into icicles. She then shot the icicles everywhere, attacking the invading Kurumis.

However, there was a delay as a result of the formation of the boundary. Just before the ice barrier was completed, the Shidou-carrying Kurumi had already advanced to right in front of Miku at a speed that cannot be seen by the naked eye.

"Hiii…"

"--ba!"

The Kurumi standing in front of Miku stuck out her tongue, and made a face.

This seemed to unnerve Miku. Miku's angry face carried a tinge of cowardliness as she began to inhale deeply.

"Kurumi! Watch out!"

Shidou shouted out unwittingly. He remembered Miku's action. It was a powerful sound wave that blew Tohka away. No matter how much Kurumi accelerated time, there was no way she could possibly avoid the attack.

But.

"Aha"

In that instant. The shadow at Miku's feet grew-- one of Kurumi's clones flew out, and muffled Miku from behind.

"Mu, muguu!?"

Realising her surroundings, Miku attempted to escape from her constraints.

But then, the Kurumi clones appeared from the shadows, and held Miku's limbs. And then, they began to drag Miku towards the shadow.

"Nnguuu! Muuunnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn--!?"

No matter how much she struggled, Miku was no match for several Kurumis . Her body was slowly engulfed by the darkness.

"Ku, Kurumi! What are you doing! Didn't we agree not to--"

Shidou stopped his sentence midway.

As he was also being engulfed by the shadow while being held by Kurumi.

"Wha…! Kurumi!?"

He widened his eyes in shock, and tried to escape. However, Kurumi's hands had no intention of releasing him. As though he was on an elevator, his vision slowly descended.

"Ku--ah…"

"Kehehe, hehehehehehehehe"

Listening to Kurumi's sharp laughter--Shidou's vision was filled entirely with a sea of darkness.

Part 4

"...ah?"

In the darkness, Shidou rapidly blinked his eyes.

Earlier, Shidou had indeed been swallowed by Kurumi's shadow -- but Shidou has maintained his consciousness and the feeling of his body.

Shidou frowned and looked around. But, there was nothing other than a large sea of darkness.

"This… it can't be, what's inside Kurumi's shadow...?"

"Aah, what's going on--! Where is this place--?"

There was a sound from behind him. Shidou turned back and noticed the source of the voice.

"Miku!?"

"...muu"

Miku had also noticed Shidou's presence. She widened her eyes in an instant , but then immediately put up an annoyed expression, as though she was about to scream.

But, just as she put up that stance. The shadows nearby began to creep out and restrain Miku.

"Hii…?"

Miku's body froze like a statue. It was followed by a muffled voice out of nowhere.

"Kihihi, don't be naughty, Miku-san"

At the same time, the giggles of a few people spread in the air.

"--alright, so the first promise has been fulfilled. Now, Shidou-san, it is up to you. We do not have time now. Please hurry."

"Al, alright…"

Shidou lightly slapped his cheeks. [Allow Shidou some time with Miku]... this promise had indeed been elegantly fulfilled. Although it was done through questionable means. And it wouldn't have hurt to explain before executing the plan.

But, there were likely no other means to allow Shidou and Miku some isolation time while the latter was protected by a massive crowd as well as Yoshino and the Yamai siblings. Shidou then turned towards Miku.

"Miku"

"...hmph"

Miku turned away from Shidou as he called her name.

Though she wasn't attacking Shidou as she had understood the circumstances, it doesn't mean that she will listen and concede to Shidou's words. With an unhappy face, she remained silent as she crossed her arms.

Shidou walked to Miku, and deeply bowed his head.

"I need to apologize to you for deceiving to you earlier. I'm really sorry…!"

Miku glanced at Shidou and pouted.

"...terrible. You're the worst--. You hid your gender to befriend me, and you even let me see that unclean object…!" With that, Miku's hands began to shake uncontrollably.

"...no, that's not it, Miku, from a practical viewpoint…"

"What did you say!?"

"No, nothing…"

Shidou hurriedly shook his head. Having said an unnecessary sentence, he could only bow down.

"I was in the wrong for deceiving you! But… please don't involve others into this! Please release Yoshino, Kaguya, Yuzuru and all the others you have controlled--"

"U… ru… saaaaaaaaaaai! Would you just shut up already! My, my dignity has already been tarnished by you, so stop flattering me! I won't listen to any of your words!"

"Mi, Miku…"

"Don't you dare call me by th--at!"

As she said so, Miku turned away again.

"Oi, oi…"

"....."

"Miku--"

"....."

It seems that the conversation has reached a dead end. [7B 3] There is no other way to continue the conversation.

"This is… frustrating…"

Even so, this was what was initially expected. Considering that Miku's initial affection for Shidou was already at its lowest, it was unrealistic to expect her to be convinced in that short period of time.

Hence Kurumi did not ask Shidou to capture Miku.

--don't interfere before Tohka is rescued.

To make Miku promise this, was Shidou's basic target.

"--Miku. Alright. Listen to me."

"..."

Miku didn't respond. However, Shidou continued.

"Tohka--you remember when we were on the stage… the girl with the tambourines? Yes, that's her. I think you should have also realised, that Tohka is similar to Yoshino and the others, that they are Spirits. Besides--Miku, you should have also seen it. Tohka was captured by the DEM Wizard"

"..."

As though she remembered something, Miku, who hasn't had a reaction, seemed to have one to the phrase [Spirit], and her shoulders trembled slightly.

"I… need to rescue Tohka now."

"...ha?"

Having heard Shidou, Miku raised her head, and let out her first sound in a while. However, she seemed to have an unhappy expression.

"Rescue her…? Why are we going to rescue her?"

"To say why… that would be because, Tohka is extremely important to me."

Listening to Shidou, Miku widened her eyes as though she was surprised, and huffed in a mocking tone.

"Important… ah, I see, I understand now. Though right now I still don't know much of it. But she is indeed a beautiful girl, wouldn't it be a waste not to rescue her?"

"...ha?"

Shidou tilted his head as he couldn't understand what Miku was driving at.

"Because, the target of your sexual desires was abducted. If you die here, you would completely lose everything, wouldn't you? Therefore, wouldn't it be happier if you live--"

"Wha… what are you saying now?"

Listening to Miku speak such harsh words, Shidou was stunned and couldn' t raise an objection.

"Be-cause, isn't that what men mean, when they say someone is important to them"

"...Your bias is very strong, indeed"

Against Shidou's words, Miku raised her chin mockingly.

"Ha, and why is that? Are you saying that that girl, Tohka-san's life is more important than yours?"

"Of course"

Shidou replied without hesitation.

"..."

As Shidou's reaction was not what she was expecting, Miku's face fell even further.

But Shidou didn't seem to notice as he went on.

"Regardless of what happens, I must rescue Tohka. And then I will return here. This time, without Kurumi, just by myself. So--Miku, will you please wait a while, and not extend your range of control?"

"...ah?"

Miku let out an unhappy sound with a face of disgust.

"You want me to believe what you say? Even if what you say was real, do you think you can walk to Tohka's side? You might end up being killed by a Wizard along the way. How sorrowful--"

"Then--"

Shidou tried to rebutt Miku, who had made fun of his plight… but decided to stop. No, he was forced to keep quiet.

To be honest, Shidou could not completely refute Miku's words.

Even if he had Kurumi, who possesses power that is literally greater than "a hundred men", DEM were opponents that were not to be underestimated. Even if he were to rescue Tohka, he might not be able to escape unscathed.

Even another one was good enough. If he could obtain the help of a Spirit--

"--ah"

At this point, Shidou let out a short sound.

Miku seemed to interpret this differently, and raised her head triumphantly.

"Do you finally understand? This promise was never meant to be able to be fulfilled from the start. If you understand--"

"That's it… a promise…"

Shidou said so as he ignored Miku. Feeling strange, Miku's cheeks twitched unhappily.

"I've already said so earlier, haven't I"

"No. What I meant was, what we promised earlier. --That. Promise. That. You. Must. Fulfill."

"Me…?"

Miku said so in an annoyed tone as she tilted her head… before stopping.

"It seems you figured it out. What we promised earlier. If we were to win the first day of the Tenou Festival--you must let me seal your powers."

Shidou said so in a low tone as he looked into Miku's eyes.

To Miku, this was a matter that she did not want to be reminded of. If this was raised, she might go on yet another rampage.

But right now, Miku and Shidou are in Kurumi's shadow, a place that disallows violence. This was the perfect location to make a fair agreement. Understanding this point, Miku regretfully bit her teeth, and stared at Shidou with a menacing glare.

"That, that's invalid! You didn't tell me you were a man--"

"I apologise for that. But, even if I was a boy, what does that have to do with the promise?"

"Uu… but we won the performance section!"

"Ah, that's right. But, the ultimate winner is the one that won overall, isn't that right? --how strange, for you to slip up there"

"I don't care! To, to seal my powers… I, I WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOON'T ALLOW IT!"

Against Shidou's calm words, Miku could only scream. This wasn't a civilised conversation, but rather, a mayhem.

Even so, it wasn't Shidou's goal to rebutt Miku. If he continued in this manner, it would only worsen her attitude. Shidou reached out a hand, in order to calm Miku.

"That's right, so. Let's make a deal. Let's change the promise to seal your powers, to another promise"

"Another promise…?"

"That's right--another promise, as long as you are willing to listen to me."

Shidou said so as he raised his index finger. Miku didn't mask her disgust as she put up an unhappy face.

"What are you saying…? Isn't that no difference from--"

"--come with me, to rescue Tohka."

"...eh?"

Miku was stunned as she listened to Shidou's words. The expression of rejection and vigilance on her face was completely erased.

"That, that's it?"

"Yes, that's right… though I'm not willing to accept it, but it is indeed as you say. Even if we had Kurumi's help, we might not be able to rescue Tohka. But, if you could help, we might…!"

"But… wasn't your goal to seal my powers? Why are you--?"

"I said it earlier--Tohka is that important to me"

"..."

Against Shidou's concise answer, Miku had a puzzled expression on her face . It was as though Shidou was spouting nonsense.

"Hmph…! I refuse! Firstly, why must I help you!"

"Mi, Miku…"

"That's enough! I won't listen to you! They're all lies! You have an ulterior motive! Selfish creatures like humans who claim to see someone else as being extremely important… they are all lies!"

"Miku, you are saying this again…!"

Shidou clenched his fist, with a pained expression.

Yes, Miku's secret that he obtained from Kurumi, that was still questionable, was this.

"Why are you rejecting humans! Aren't you--"

Shidou was about to say it.

In this space filled entirely with darkness, a ray of light shone in.

"...!?"

Looking upwards, the dark space had begun to disperse. Shidou began to tense up.

In that instant, Shidou thought it was due to Miku's voice… however, he was completely unscathed, even though he was beside Miku. Besides, Miku was also looking upwards with a puzzled expression.

And then, as if to answer the questions in Shidou's mind, Kurumi's voice began to spread from the surroundings.

"While I'll hate to intrude on your pleasant conversation… I'm afraid my abilities are reaching a time limit."

"Eh…? Uu, uwaah!?"

"Kya!?"

Contrary to what was felt when they were pulled into the shadow, there was a sense of weightlessness around them.

Following a feeling as though their brains were being violently shaken about, their vision was immediately filled with multiple colours-- and in an instant, Shidou and Miku had returned to the stage at the Tenguu Square.

"Uu, uwahh…"

It was glaring to their eyes, as they had just been pulled out from the shadows.

But their eyes quickly adjusted to it-- and they saw the situation on the stage.

There were several Kurumis surrounding Shidou as though they were protecting him. Opposing them were Yoshino, on <Frozen Puppet Zadkiel> and Kaguya and Yuzuru arming <Knight of Winds Raphael>. The hostility between them was apparent.

"O, onee-sama…!"

"Aneue-sama! Are you alright!"

"Relief. As long as you're fine"

Yoshino and the others called out to Miku, as they saw her emerge from the shadows with Shidou.

At the same time, Kurumi neared Shidou, and bent her knees.

"Can you stand up? Shidou-san"

"Kurumi… what, happened…"

"Didn't I say so? The time limit has been breached. In order for you two to remain in my shadow, I must extend it. If it was damaged, that space would quickly collapse. --Although I've tried to salvage as much time as possible, it's not very easy when you have three Spirits as your opponents"

As she said so, Kurumi looked at her surroundings.

Following her line of vision, a massive amount of Kurumi corpses could be seen. It seemed that there had been a violent battle.

"Our [Time] isn't limitless either, it's time for us to retreat"

"Wait a moment! Just a while--"

Shidou's collar was suddenly grabbed, causing him to lose his breath temporarily.

"*cough*... what's the big idea…!"

As he was beginning to lecture Kurumi while coughing, Shidou noticed that the ground where he was standing on has been impaled by an icicle, and was unable to continue.

As he followed the direction of sight, the normally docile Yoshino was staring at Shidou with hostile eyes.

"I won't forgive… onee-sama's enemies…"

"Yo, Yoshino…"

"Do you understand now?"

Kurumi raised her gun as she said so in a disappointed tone.

"<Emperor of Time (Zafkiel)>-- [The First Bullet (Aleph)]"

Aiming the acceleration-granting bullet to herself, she carried Shidou with a hand, and began to run from the stage at a high speed.

"Whoa…!?"

Similar to the gigantic force he felt earlier, Shidou couldn't help but let out a sound. But Kurumi didn't seem to notice, as she stepped on the lighting equipment, and fled from a hole in the ceiling.

But, Miku would not let them get away that easily. Pressing her hand on her forehead to suppress the dizziness from emerging from the shadows, she ordered.

"Don't, don't let them get away…!"

"Got it!"

"Acknowledged. I understand"

The Yamai sisters flew out after Kurumi, in response to Miku's orders.

Even though Kurumi had used an acceleration-granting bullet, their opponents were still the Spirits that control wind. In a battle of attrition, they would be caught up.

"Ara ara, this is very frustrating"

Kurumi raised her gun again as she said so in an unnerved tone.

"<Emperor (Zafkiel) of Time> -- [The Second (Bet) Bullet] [7B 4]!"

In that instant, the shadows from the stage began to move rapidly into the barrel -- as Kurumi fired at the Yamai sisters.

"Hmph! Unrepentant woman! That toy is useless against us!"

"Restraint. Hold, Kaguya. This--"

At the same time as the warning, Kaguya and Yuzuru's actions began to stop .

No--more precisely, it became unnatural.

They were moving ahead at a slow rate. That's right. They hadn't stopped in mid-air, but rather, were moving at an extraordinarily slow rate.

"This is…"

"Kehehe, [The Second (Bet) Bullet]. The person hit by it will have their time slow down"

Kurumi responded to Shidou. She explained it in a simple manner, as though knowing that Shidou would ask that question.

"It would have been safer if I used [The Seventh (Zayin) Bullet] [7B 5], but that has a greater cost--especially when we don't have that much [Time] left. As such, this suffices for us to make our escape."

As Kurumi had predicted, the distance between them and the Yamai sisters had grown. Even for Spirits with speed as fast as wind, they wouldn't be able to catch up to Kurumi after being hit by a retarding bullet.

Kurumi carried Shidou as she continued to fly in the air, mingling into the streets.

Finally, the effects of [The First (Aleph) Bullet] vanished as their speed dramatically decreased. Kurumi weaved into in between two buildings, and placed Shidou on the ground.

"Alright, right now--Shidou-san, please come over here"

"Eh? Ah, alright"

Shidou's mind was still blurred as though he had just descended from an extremely fast roller-coaster, and he was quickly pulled into an alley by Kurumi.

In an instant, a large tornado swept past from above them. Needless to say, they were the Yamai sisters. It seems that they were still looking for Shidou.

"Ara ara. While [The Second (Bet) Bullet] hasn't robbed them of their consciousness, but they are still capable of seeing us with that retarded speed. What kind of vision do they have"

"...kuu"

Their voices shouldn't be heard at this distance. But Shidou still nervously gulped down his saliva as he looked upwards.

The clouds above were quickly dissipated as two mini tornadoes continued to revolve in the air, before heading to another place.

It seems they have given up. As soon as the noise was no more, Shidou let out a sigh of relief.

"So-- Shidou-san, what about Miku?"

Kurumi had placed the gun into her own shadow as she asked him. Shidou bit his lips, and replied.

"...mm, while we spoke a lot… but there wasn't a definite answer. To be exact, I may have maddened her at the end. Sorry, Kurumi. It's my fault. And you've put in so much effort earlier…"

Hearing Shidou's words, Kurumi widened her eyes in shock.

"Ara ara ara"

"What, what is it?"

"No, I wasn't expecting for Shidou-san to compliment me for my work. Ufufu, how pleasing. Can you pet my head?"

"Don't, don't joke around"

Having interrupted his speech, Shidou couldn't help but sigh. Kurumi stared at Shidou interestingly and giggled again.

"Maa, it's alright. As long as we have talked to her, she won't risk herself to interfere with us… more importantly, we don't have to be wary of them anymore"

"Ahh… I understand."

Shidou nodded his head as he sweatdropped. Indeed, after experiencing Kurumi's abilities first-hand, they would be wary of Shidou's group. As long as Kurumi was with him, Miku won't interfere with them unnecessarily.

"Buuuuut…"

Kurumi opened her eyes halfway as she licked her lips and snuggled next to Shidou.

"! What, what is it, why the sudden--"

"Since Shidou-san was the one trying to ask Miku, I won't intrude much into the details of your conversation with Miku… but in your conversation, there was one part that made me unhappy"

"Made you unhappy?"

Kurumi replied with a soft "eh". Although it was just an ordinary phrase, it was enough to make Shidou shudder, as she had said it to his ear.

"You want Miku to be our ally…? Ne, Shidou-san? Are you saying that you still feel unsafe even with just me helping?"

"What, what I meant was…!"

No, it couldn't be said. Against an enemy with whom they have no knowledge of, Shidou did indeed feel unsafe with just Kurumi's help.

And then, at the same time a soft giggle was heard near his ears, Shidou could feel his earlobes being licked.

"Ehhh?"

His body shuddered again on reflex. Kurumi's mouth bent into the shape of a crescent moon as she moved next to Shidou.

"Ufufu… I was joking. --indeed, we don't know how strong our enemy is. Shidou-san's judgement to get more allies under that situation should be commended, and I'm not angry about that… however"

Kurumi stuck out her right index finger, and traced at Shidou's cheek. Shidou's entire body froze, as he didn't know what to do against this obscene act.

"Shidou-san… will you really not lie?"

"It's, it's not of…"

"Ara ara, even this one is complimenting you."

She gracefully turned away from Shidou as though she was dancing, as her finger finally left Shidou. Shidou, who had been finally released, heaved a sigh of relief.

At the same time, the shadow beneath Kurumi's legs began to quiver slightly , and just when Shidou thought it was going to expand, another Kurumi appeared from inside.

"Uwoh"

Although he was aware of Kurumi's abilities to a certain extent. It still shocked Shidou to see two identical faces suddenly appearing in front of him.

Although the Kurumi that just appeared was shocked by Shidou's reaction, she didn't seem to be annoyed by it, and instead smiled. She then turned towards the Kurumi from before and whispered into her ear.

"...fumu, I see"

The Kurumi that was listening put her hand at her jaw and nodded her head slightly.

"--thanks for your work. You may leave."

As Kurumi said so, the Kurumi that was whispering turned towards Shidou, curtsied elegantly, and vanished into the shadows.

"That, that was?"

"Eh, they are the [Me]s that were sent out to look for information."

"Information… does that mean--"

If they were to refer to 'information' now, there could only be one possibility. Shidou widened his eyes, and looked at Kurumi.

Kurumi then slowly nodded her head.

"That's right-- we've found out where Tohka is."

"Re, really!? Where!? Is she alright!?"

Shidou asked in a low voice as he grabbed Kurumi tightly. Kurumi's eyes widened in an instant, and giggled softly.

"Shidou-san truly likes Tohka-san. You're making me jealous… I'll have to add on a special condition if you want me to help rescue Tohka-san"

"Condition...?"

"Such as, saying 'I like Kurumi more than Tohka' in front of her"

"O, oi…"

"Ufufu, I was just teasing you"

Kurumi stuck out her tongue and made a face. ...basically, Shidou felt unnerved easily every time he talked to Kurumi.

Shidou coughed slightly to regain his composure. He then looked at Kurumi again.

"So… Kurumi. Where was Tohka taken to?"

"...eh"

As she said so, Kurumi slowly raised her head.

"--The Japanese branch of Deus Ex Machina Industries, in Office Building 1. That… is where Tohka-san is imprisoned in."

Part 5

"--now, the next question. Are you aware of the term [Ratatoskr]?"

Inside the room of anti-matter. Ellen, who was sitting opposite Tohka, continued to flip through her documents as she asked in a seemingly uncaring tone. But Tohka huffed before moving her face away.

"Hmph! As if I'll tell you!"

"I see. Then, the next question. Do you know why Itsuka Shidou is capable of using an Angel?"

Ellen didn't seem to mind as she continued. It was already like this from the start.

Instead, it was the one who was being questioned that became exhausted first. Tohka let out a sigh.

"...woman. You're called Ellen, right? The cameraman that was with us during the school trip."

"It's my honour that you can remember me"

"Why is a cameraman doing this? Are you not making enough to fill your rice bowls?"

"...no, I was merely masquerading as one. That isn't my true profession."

"Wha…? You're a cameraman and yet you're not a cameraman."

"No, as I said--"

Ellen scratched her face as she tried to explain, before a speaker-like equipment fitted at the ceiling began to emit noise.

[Don't do it, this is too dangerous! What if something--]

At this point, Ellen began to frown in surprise.

"What happened?"

[Ah… that, he said he wanted to enter the isolation room…!]

"Enter here? Who is that?"

Ellen asked. The voice over the speaker paused slightly, before resuming.

[It's, it's Mr. Wescott…]

"...Ike?" [7B 6]

As if replying to Ellen, a man's voice came through the speaker.

[--yes, can you hear me, Ellen. They aren't willing to listen to me, so can you help me out? I'm disillusioned in our own employees]

"Everybody's worried about you. Please don't mess around"

[I see. You can think of it that way too. But this is troubling. A subordinate that listens to me and a subordinate that works for my sake, I wonder which one is better]

"Regardless, I belong to the latter"

[Don't say such things, my cute Ellen]

Listening to the voice over the speaker say such words, Ellen couldn't help but sigh with a never-before-seen feeling of helplessness.

"...it's alright, let him in"

[But…! Is it alright?]

"Yes, even if the Spirit was to fool around, everything's under control as long as I'm here"

[I, I understand… please be careful…!]

A few seconds later, the wall cracked like before, and a door opened in there.

--and from there, entered a man.

He was a tall and slender man. His most distinctive feature is his simple silver hair and eyes so sharp that they looked like they were carved onto his face with a dagger. Roughly at the age of thirty-five, a dangerous aura surrounded him, masking his true age.

"..."

As the man walked into the room, Tohka felt an unknown sense of discomfort.

It wasn't because Ellen had spread her Territory. But for some unknown reason, at the moment Tohka saw him, she felt as if the temperature had dropped several degrees.

"You, you, who are you…?!"

Tohka asked in a quivering tone, as she stared at the man. Having seemed to have understood what she meant, the man replied.

"It is an honour to meet you, [Princess]. No… Yatogami Tohka."

As he said so, the man slowly moved forward towards her. With every step he took, the torturous feeling Tohka felt grew.

"I am Isaac Wescott of DEM Industries. I'll be in your care"

The man -- Wescott, used a tone that would be meant for speaking with friends. But Tohka continued to eye Wescott with hostility in her eyes.

"...am I being hated?"

"If you want to be liked, you should think of a better method."

Listening to Ellen's words, Wescott shrugged his shoulders and said "You're right".

Tohka suppressed the nauseousness that was rising from her stomach, and continued glaring at Wescott.

"You, are you the mastermind?! What--what is your aim…?!"

Following that, Wescott stared at Tohka again, and said so silently.

"My aim… hm. Yes. That would actually be very simple. All we want are your Spirit powers."

He curved his lips as he continued.

"In order to topple the restraints of this world"

"What did you say…?"

Wescott's words were too complex for Tohka to understand. She frowned.

"You bastard, have you mistaken something? I don't have those kind of powers! "

"Yes, that's right. The. You. Now. Lacks. These powers."

"The me… now?"

Wescott dramatically spread out his hands in response to the shocked Tohka.

"The you currently residing in this world, is living too peacefully. Therefore, we need to put you into sleep first. Yes--just when you were floating in the sea between the worlds. No… to be more precise, the feeling that you got before you awakened."

"What are… you saying…?"

"You"

Wescott continued without averting his gaze.

"How is it possible, for you to completely land in despair?"

"Wh, what…?"

"To hate this world, to hate humans. Even the strongest Angel isn't capable of filling the hole in your heart. You can only rely on external assistance beyond that of an Angel. How is it possible for you to enter that state? Looking through the AST records, there was a time when you was indeed near such a stage … what exactly happened then?"

As he said so, Wescott turned towards Ellen.

"--I say, Ellen. Maybe it would be faster if we increased the physical torture on her? Let's start off with electrocution. And then decrease the oxygen concentration in the room, and observe her reaction. Maybe we can also try changing the air pressure. If those fail, then let's chip her nails away, and her fingers… ah, right, maybe we can chip her teeth too. The pain felt by the nervous system will be unbearable by then"

"Wha…"

Tohka's face turned blue, as she felt a shudder running down her back.

The methods that Wescott suggested were enough to make others scared. But compared to the uncaring attitude in which they raised it, it seemed mild enough, and their attitude was enough to make Tohka feel even more fear.

As though they didn't seem to notice her reaction, Wescott continued with great interest.

"A Spirit's body is much more resilient than a human… try feeding her poison. Ah, in that case, we should also give her tranquilizers. And then, yes, how do you feel about your own chastity. The pain you will feel when we completely destroy whatever dignity you have as a woman. In the long time you 've spent in this world, have you had any friends or lovers? If we were to kill a loved one in front of you, how would you feel?"

"..."

Listening to Wescott's words, Tohka's face twitched slightly. In an instant-- she recalled the time when Shidou was killed by Origami. [7B 7]

Wescott leisurely nodded his head at Tohka's reaction.

"--Ellen"

"Yes. I suppose, the person closest to her would be Itsuka Shidou. She had a completely different reaction to when we raised his name compared to when we raised others."

"I see. Alright, then we shall keep waiting."

"Understood"

Wescott nodded, as he prepared to leave the room.

"Hold it! You bastard, what are you trying to do to Shidou?!"

Tohka shouted at the image of his back, as she tried to stand up and attack him. The handcuffs that restrained her hands began to emit a strange sound.

But--Tohka soon felt an invisible force throughout her entire body, pushing her back into the chair.

"Ah, gah…!"

"Be honest with me"

Ellen's cold, icy voice rang through her ears.

"Shi--dou…"

As she muttered Shidou's name with a weak voice--Tohka lost consciousness .

Chapter 8: Streets Engulfed in Fire and Shadow

Part 1

"Aaah, mouuuuu…! Annoying annoying annoying! How is a mere human able to take me for a fooooooool!"

Within the restaurant of a high-class hotel near the Tenguu Square, Miku pounded her table impatiently.

After the attack on Tenguu Square by Shidou and the mysterious Spirit, Ai Mai Mii had suggested to head out for some food to calm her down, as they were worried about the restless Miku.

Needless to say, the hotel's staff and guests, were all chased out of the hotel after coming under Miku's control. The restaurant was basically bought out by Miku, as she sat at the table, with a luxurious spread of food in front of her.

But, no matter how delicious the cuisine, or how cute the girls accompanying her, they were unable to ease Miku's temperament.

"O, onee-sama… please calm down"

[Yeah--. Wouldn't it be a waste of such a cute face if you keep on being angry ?]

Yoshino and [Yoshinon] standing behind Miku said so, as she removed the stains on the table caused by Miku hitting her table.

"Indeed. Aneue-sama is the one absolute existence approved by the gods. There's no need to get so riled up because of the words of one such as Shidou."

"Affirmation. It is best to forget about such people. There will not be an end to things if you continue to mind them."

Kaguya and Yuzuru placed their hands on Miku's shoulders.

"Eh, ehhh… that's right. That's right. I don't need to bother about such an insignificant person like him."

Miku said so as though to assure herself, as she nodded her head repeatedly.

But, in the next moment—

(--because Tohka, is extremely important to me)

Shidou's voice sounded again in her mind and Miku could not help but pound her table again. The glassware began to sound, and the beverage from her cup began to spill onto the tablecloth.

"Important…? What does he mean by important. Is he an idiot… he's only engrossed in his own feelings! Ahh, mouuu, thinking of it just makes me feel sick! Humans… especially inferior beings such as men, how can they view someone else as more important than their own life! This is impossible…!"

Miku placed her cutlery back on the table, and began to ruffle her hair.

--indeed, the praises of man, were mostly for show. It was impossible to have mutual trust. Humans are merely incapable of sustaining their own existence. It has to be so. There is no other way.

"If it's not for them, I—"

"Onee-sama…?"

Hearing Yoshino's worried voice, Miku returned to her senses. She pretended that everything was fine, as she waved her hand and turned around to the girls in maid outfits behind her.

"…ne, you girls, you are in the same school as Shidou-san and Tohka-san, right?"

Then, Ai, Mai, Mii, and the Yamai sisters nodded. Yoshino looked at [Yoshinon] on her left hand, and then spoke.

"Um, um… I'm, not. I'm sorry"

"But, you know about the two of them, right?"

"Ye, yes…! Of, of course!"

"There isn't a problem then."

Miku turned her chair backwards, straightened her legs, and then looked at the girls in the maid outfits in order.

"I hope you will answer me truthfully… what is Tohka-san's relationship with that man called Shidou? Is it true that he feels that Tohka is important to him?"

"……."

Against Miku's question, the girls looked at each other thoughtfully.

Then, they nodded to each other, and turned to Miku.

"Ah--, he's such a frivolous man. Saying things like I like you, you're important to me, as though it's as natural to him as eating and breathing. He even regularly flirts with me"

"That's right. His mind's so linked to his lower body, you might as well say that his mind is his lower body"

"Yeah, he's not empathetic to such things. He must have been just saying things about Tohka-chan. You don't need to mind about it, onee-sama"

"……"

Miku listened to the obvious bluffs of Ai, Mai and Mii, before sighing and continuing.

"…I believe I said that I wanted you to answer truthfully? I'm happy that you're considering my feelings, but I don't like children who lie"

Miku held her head upwards as Ai Mai Mii's shoulders began to shiver in an obvious manner.

Then, they sighed resignedly.

"Itsuka-kun and Tohka-chan's relationship… hm. Um, to be honest, we don't know. They don't seem like lovers, but they don't seem like ordinary friends either…"

"That's right. Ah, but it is true that they are always together. Tohka-chan looks extremely happy and often smiles when she is with Itsuka-kun."

"Mm. Itsuka-kun is also extremely fond of Tohka-chan. He always places Tohka-chan's interest in everything he does. They have such a close relationship "

"Hmmm… is that so?"

She half opened her eyes, and looked towards the Spirits.

"Then, if one had to risk their own life to save Tohka-san… what do you think Shidou-san would do?"

Miku asked specifically. Yoshino looked as if she was trying to hide something.

"Thi, this… onee-sama, can… I mention something?"

"Sure. As long as you tell me what you know about Shidou-san's circumstances."

"I feel… yes. I feel that if it's Shidou-san… he will definitely not hesitate to rescue Tohka-san. Even… even, if he could… die as a result."

"……"

Miku bit her lips as she heard Yoshino's answer. Noticing this, Yoshino let out a pained "hii" cry.

"…Are the rest of you of similar opinion?"

As she said so, she looked at the Yamai sisters. They began to think as they placed their hands below their chins.

"Hm, right, it would definitely be the case if it was Shidou. I could even make a bet with you. That idiot won't think twice about risking his life. Because of that, I was able to survive with Yuzuru."

"Affirmation. To put it bluntly, he is insane. He will ignore everything if it was to rescue Tohka."

"…"

Miku's expression worsened.

(--of course)

Shidou's words ringed in her mind.

(--that would be because, Tohka is extremely important to me)

"Ku…"

Miku restlessly clenched her fists, as she roughly stood up from her chair. She scratched her head, and heaved a sigh.

"…I'm tired today. I'm heading back for a shower. Please help to prepare my room."

"Ye, yes!"

"Onee-sama's orders…"

"…will be carried out!"

Ai Mai Mii immediately stood upright, and walked in front of Miku to open the doors for her.

Miku slowly began walking, and turned back just as she was about to walk out of the door.

"…let the residents continue searching for Shidou-san's location. If they find him, it doesn't matter if I'm asleep, inform me immediately."

"Eh…? This is…?"

Ai Mai Mii widened their eyes. Miku's vision instantly sharpened.

"Of course we have to punish him! Don't question, just do as I say!"

Miku called as she crossed over the corridor.

Part 2

The hands of the clock had just crossed the peak, and had began moving downwards for 2 hours.

Under the faint glow of the moon and the stars, Shidou and Kurumi looked at the tower in front of their eyes.

"Tohka is… right here"

He said in a low voice as he looked at his surroundings.

The current location of Shidou's group is a corner within the office street of Kagamiyama City, east of Tenguu City. Because few people are out at this time, the buildings were illuminated with a faint light, letting out a mysterious pressurising aura.

Looking up. At the end of the road Shidou's group was on, was an extremely massive building.

"Have you noticed it?"

Noticing Shidou focusing on the building, Kurumi, who was standing beside him, asked.

"From here on, everything are facilities belonging to DEM. All those buildings that you see, are offices and research facilities."

"All of them…"

Shidou looked to the side, and swallowed his saliva. Yet he did not feel afraid. Tohka was right there, somewhere.

"...then, where is the first office?"

"Mm, it is the gigantic structure in the middle of these buildings. But unfortunately, I do not know specifically her location within the building."

"So that's the case..."

"There is nothing to talk about if we can't get there. Let us advance without being noticed – then"

Kurumi turned around to have her back against the wall, facing Shidou as she spoke.

"From now, I will be infiltrating DEM territory with Shidou-san – before that , let's discuss about our plan."

"How?"

"Eh. The plan by itself is simple. Firstly, Shidou-san and I will head to the first office building of DEM's Japan branch. Are there any issues prior to this?"

"Ah"

"Even so, this is the main focus of DEM in Japan. It is impossible that there are no precautions."

"...true."

Shidou awkwardly nodded his head. Their enemies are the makers of the Realisers, DEM. Although it is currently night, and hence near impossible for a battle of a large scale to happen on an empty street, it is also impossible to take their opponents lightly.

"So, after arriving at the target block, I will summon [us] within their territory, and begin attack on the other facilities."

"I see... to infiltrate among the chaos produced. But, if we were to go overboard, and then accidentally fortify their defences, what do we do next? DEM will definitely have preventions against people trying to retrieve Tohka."

Listening to Shidou's words, Kurumi lightly nodded her head.

"Indeed, Tohka-san is the most valuable sample that they have within their premises. If their premises were to be attacked, they would immediately fortify their defences against Tohka-san, right?"

"Yes. Hence—"

"Indeed so. It is virtually impossible to enter the building that Tohka-san is contained in without being noticed. Hence, it is not a bad idea to divert their attention. No matter how important Tohka-san is, there is no way that they would sit and watch their own facilities get destroyed."

"Umu…"

Shidou placed his hand below his chin and nodded. While it was simplistic, it was also an extremely effective means. No matter what, only Kurumi is capable of having thousands instantly appear at the scene, and finish this unlikely plan.

"I understand, then, let's do it as planned."

"It's a pleasure to be trusted by others – then, let us move."

"Oh…"

Shidou clenched his fists and encouraged himself. Together with Kurumi, they moved towards the DEM building.

But – the instant they entered DEM's premises.

Shidou and Kurumi frowned simultaneously and looked at each other.

It was a familiar feeling. Although it was slight, it felt like an invisible brush was brushing over their body.

"Oi, what was"

Shidou was about to speak to Kurumi—before he stopped.

No, to be precise, it was covered by a louder sound.

—

WOOO

At the same time Shidou's group entered DEM's premises, a sharp sound began sounding within the surroundings.

Instantly, Shidou thought it was an alarm used to detect intruders. But… that 's wrong. He had heard this sound before.

"A spacequake warning…!?"

Shidou scowled. Indeed. This is an alarm indicating the imminent disaster that occurs when a Spirit appears – the area alert for a spacequake.

"A Spirit has appeared!? In this area!?"

It was an unbelievable moment. Shidou hurriedly looked around. The workers and convenience shop employees working overtime were all surprised and had began to evacuate. The entrances of the underground shelter were opened, and the city was immediately transformed into one defending against a spacequake.

"No, it does not seem so."

Kurumi said with her eyes slit.

"I don't feel the spatial movement from when a spacequake occurs. At least, I don't think it's a Spirit crossing over to this world from the other one."

"Then, this alarm is…"

"…This is merely my hypothesis. I believe it is DEM who has sounded the alarm. Shidou-san should have felt it earlier, the feeling of when you are being touched by a Wizard's Territory."

"Eh…? But, this is a spacequake alarm… isn't it?"

Shidou did not understand DEM's intentions. At least, this alarm wasn't activated from within the DEM facilities. Even if they could activate the spacequake alarm, it would have been overreacting to activate it because of trespassers.

"That is correct. There are a few possibilities, such as—"

Kurumi began to consider as she placed her hand below her chin, and then she suddenly grabbed Shidou's collar, and began to leap backwards towards the right.

"Kuu…eh….!? You, what are—"

Shidou, whose collar had been suddenly pulled by Kurumi, began to argue—before stopping.

The reason is simple. The spot which they were standing earlier was hit by a piercing torrent of light, inducing an explosion, creating a large crater within the ground.

"Wh, wh, wha…"

"—it seems that they are trying to raise a commotion with the intent of removing witnesses."

Saying so, Kurumi looked up towards the sky.

Following her line of sight, Shidou's face began to perspire.

In the sky, against the moon and the buildings, were a few silver marionettes in CR-Units floating in the air.

Heads covered in a helmet resembling a motorcycle driver. Over-developed arms, and legs that were the reverse of human anatomy. Shidou remembered that shape.

"That is – <Bandersnatch>…!?"

Just as Shidou said so, the <Bandersnatch> had aimed the barrel of their laser cannons at him, and fired the trigger without delay.

"Uwah!"

"Tsk—"

Kurumi grabbed Shidou underneath her arms, and jumped up into the air. The magic light ray from the <Bandersnatch> exploded in the ground, igniting a small explosion. The evacuating employees gave a look of amazement, before quickly hurriedly entering the shelter.

"[Us]!"

Kurumi called as she landed with Shidou in her arms. The shadow beneath her feet instantly widened. From there, nearly a hundred Kurumis appeared, and begin jumping towards the <Bandersnatch>.

[Kehe, hehehehehehehehehehehehehehehehehehe!]

It was a marvellous sight.

Against the <Bandersnatch> in the sky, a large amount of Kurumis had began charging at them, using their hands to decapitate their wings, guns, hands, legs, and brains. If the <Bandersnatch> possessed human emotions, it would undoubtedly be feeling fear right now.

Of course the <Bandersnatch> would not go down without a fight, and they fired their laser cannons and missiles, and although they hit the Kurumis' brains and chests, they were simply outnumbered.

The safety lights on their heads flashed red, and alarms sounded as though they were crying out as they perished – the last <Bandersnatch> located in the middle became a pile of scrap metal as it fell to the floor.

"In, incredible…"

"This is not the time to be amazed. Reinforcements are approaching."

Kurumi looked inwards towards the worksite without relaxing.

It seems the earlier <Bandersnatch> were defensive mechanisms. From within the buildings ahead, more <Bandersnatch> and Wizards appeared. There was nothing to mention about the entrances, as the walls of the building could be modified, and the walls around them began to reveal entrances as the Wizards within revealed themselves. While exact numbers were unknown, at the very least it exceeds five hundred.

"Wha…!?"

Shidou let out a dismayed sound. Although it is expected that there would be reinforcements, it was unexpected to be of this degree.

"Muu, we do not have a choice. Shidou-san, it is time to change our strategy."

"Eh?"

Shidou had just reacted to Kurumi's words, before the ground which had been stained black unknowingly, began to spawn Kurumi's clones. Twin guns in their hands, they begin to sortie for the incoming onslaught of Wizards.

"—Leave the marionettes to [us]. Let us use this opportunity to blow through the defences!"

"Al, alright…!"

There isn't another option. Shidou nodded his head forcefully.

"Then—I am going to go full speed ahead. Please hold tightly to me and don't fall! <Emperor of Time[Zafkiel]> – [The First Bullet[Aleph]]…!"

Kurumi whipped out a gun, holding it to her temple, and fired.

At the same time, the DEM Wizards had began their fierce battle with Kurumi's clones. The laser cannons and missiles fired from the Wizards, crossed fire with the bullets fired from the Kurumis' guns, igniting a large explosion.

"—!"

Shidou was being held by Kurumi as they crossed through the battlefield at a high speed.

The intense gravitational pull, and the various explosives igniting within the vicinity. The resulting sonic booms were enough to nearly induce a state of unconsciousness.

"Ku…!"

Shidou clenched his teeth as though he was about to bleed, as he forced himself to stay awake.

In a while, they had passed what could be the centre of the battlefield, and Kurumi ceased her high speed escape. At the same time the effects of [The First Aleph Bullet] began to fade as Kurumi's speed returned to normal.

"Are you alright, Shidou-san."

"Ah, um, I'm alright"

As he said so, he had began to manage standing on his own feet. Although he was still dizzy, there wasn't time to bother about it. Shidou slapped his cheeks, and clenched his fists to vitalise himself.

"Our time is short. Let's go, Kurumi"

"Eh. The first offices should be—"

—at the moment Kurumi pointed her index finger to denote the direction. Shidou thought that her entire body had turned black.

"Ah—"

Faint, it was a faint sound. The Kurumi, who had been conversing with Shidou, had her brain thrown into the sky.

"Eh…?"

It was sudden, and Shidou didn't understand what had happen in that moment, aside from a low sound.

Then, the place where Kurumi's brain was supposed to be began to spray out blood like a fountain, staining Shidou red. At this moment, Shidou's brain finally registered what had happened.

"Uu—uwaaaaaa!?"

Shidou screamed loudly as he fell to the ground. At the same time, Kurumi's body fell to the ground like a lifeless puppet.

"Ku, Kurumi! Kurumi!"

It was clear that there was no hope, yet Shidou continued to run towards Kurumi. The brainless body continued to convulse as it created a red puddle on the floor.

At this moment, Shidou noticed who was standing behind Kurumi. There was a leg that was being wrapped in a metallic material.

"Ah—"

It was without question a Wizard's CR-Unit. It was… a Wizard from DEM.

—he had to run. Even if his heart knew that, his legs would not budge. Shidou held his breath and looked ahead.

It was an unknown unit with a green-black colouring. A weapon with a large barrel on the left hand, with a sharpness that reminds people of a wolf.

"This is it—at last I've found you."

But, the instant he heard the Wizard's voice, Shidou's eyebrow twitched as he looked upwards at the face of the individual.

With hair combed into a long ponytail, and energetic eyes. As well as a mole beneath the left eye. And a face that resembled Shidou.

"Ma, na…?"

Yes, it was the girl who claimed to be Shidou's blood-related sister – Takamiya Mana.

A few months ago, she had sustained critical injuries against Kurumi, and she should have been in a state of complete recovery. From the looks of it, she had recovered while Shidou was unaware.

But, Shidou didn't have the time to be surprised by an unexpected reunion, as he tensed up again. Mana was originally a Wizard deployed to AST by DEM. Hence she should have come to eliminate the enemy infiltrating DEM – Shidou.

But, at the instant Mana and Shidou met face-to-face. A stern face immediately relaxed as she rushed ahead to hug Shidou.

"Nii-sama! I'm glad you're alright!"

"Wa, wah!?"

Shidou felt the feeling of Mana's uneven CR-unit in shock as he confirmed his surroundings. Then, he calmed down, held Mana's shoulders, and then pushed them slightly.

"Ma, Mana… it is you right? Are you injured?"

"Yes! Mana is feeling alright now!"

Mana bent her arms as if to show off her muscles. Her cheery tone was a direct contrast to the current conditions as Shidou temporarily forgot about his nervous emotions.

"Th, then, Mana? You are a Wizard of DEM right? So you are here to eliminate me…"

"No, I'll explain the details later. But for now, I'm no longer working for DEM"

"Eh…? But, your equipment…"

"Ah, this is from [Fraxinus]. I'm now under the care of [Ratatoskr].

"Eh… eeeeeeh?"

Repeatedly listening to the new information, his mind is now in a whirl. Why was Mana in [Ratatoskr]…? Isn't [Ratatoskr] an organisation with different values than AST and the DEM?

"But, why did you attack Kurumi…"

"Ah, it looked like Nii-sama was being attacked by [Nightmare], so I had to help."

Listening to Mana's words, Shidou twitched. That said, Kurumi, who was assisting Shidou now, was indeed a man-eating Spirit against Mana. That meant if the two were to meet, Kurumi would have simply been mistaken as an enemy.

"N, no! Kurumi was helping me out!"

"Help…?"

Mana had a face of surprise. Then, the shadow on the walls of the building began to widen, revealing Kurumi's crooked smile. At the same time, the fallen Kurumi's body was absorbed by the shadows.

"Kehehe, your greeting style is as unrefined as ever"

"Kurumi…! Are you alright!?"

"Eh. It cannot be, do you think that something like this would be enough to kill me?"

It seems she had exchanged places with her clone. Kurumi smiled as she touched her hand with her finger. Mana let out a "tch" in spite.

"It is indeed unfortunate. I was so close to getting rid of such an unpleasant face."

"Did I not mention this before? You cannot do it."

"Hah, would you like to try? If your bullets could even hit me."

"Kehe, hehehehehehe! For someone to speak such words, especially when they survived because of my carelessness. Or had you lost your memories because you were too scared?"

"Ah, so our battle-hungry and murderous maniac is still speaking? Do you not have the energy to fight me any longer?"

"Ufufu, no one can help you this time. Maybe I shall savour your tongue after cutting every limb off your body?"

Mana and Kurumi glared at each other with eyes full of hostility and killing intent, speaking such dangerous words. Shidou, who was between them, could only feel the feeling of cold sweat on his back.

"Wait, wait a bit, the two of you…"

Even as Shidou said so, Mana continued to glare daggers at Kurumi. Kurumi then sighed.

"Alright, how about this – I still have other business at DEM, so I'll separate from you guys here. You would be alright with Mana-san here, right?"

"Oi, oi, Kurumi…?"

"Please relax. [Our] accompanying fight will still continue. –Then, let us retreat."

Kurumi closed her eyes and then retreated into the shadows. Then, her shadow immediately disappeared from the wall.

"Kurumi! Kurumi!?"

There was no response no matter how he called. It seems she has indeed left. Shidou scratched his hair.

"Hm, although I'm not sure what kind of agreement is it. But I'll let it slide this time. Requesting such a monster, I wonder what kind of condition she would hold you to."

"Mana, you…"

"Compared to that. –excuse me, nii-sama."

Mana didn't seem to bother where Kurumi went as she looked at Shidou's face. And then felt his chest for a while. Then, she sighed as though she was in relief.

"Oi! What, what are you doing!"

Shidou couldn't help but shout loudly. Mana spoke in a conflicted voice.

"That, when I watched Nii-sama's footage while I was still recovering in [Fraxinus], Nii-sama was in a cute getup. I thought in the short period of time that I was away from you, Nii-sama had developed a strange interest."

"No way!"

"Eh, I'm relieved then. It seems you weren't operated on… what happened down there, I suppose it wasn't removed?"

"Of course not… what do you think I am…"

"That's alright, Mana is very forgiving. It's fine if you just like women's clothing. Let's go shopping the next time."

"But…"

Shidou sighed heavily. Mana pressed her ear as she frowned. It seemed a sound was coming from the headset that she was wearing.

"Ah… that's right – nii-sama, this is for you."

Mana took out a small electronic device from a pocket-like extension at her waist, and handed it to Shidou.

"This is… an earphone?"

"Yes, please handle it carefully. There is a circuit inside."

He took the earphone from Mana, and placed it in his right ear. He connected it for a while, before hearing an awkward voice from the earphone.

[…Shidou, can you hear me?]

"Kotori!? Have you returned to normal!?"

There was no need to question who was the other voice. The owner of the voice is Shidou's little sister, the commander of [Ratatoskr], Kotori. Kotori should have heard Miku's performance over the speaker, and like Yoshino and the Yamai sisters, become one of Miku's loyal fans.

[Eh, yeah, I suppose so.]

Kotori said so as she continued while seemingly feeling awkward.

[That, I'm sorry. That… wasn't my intention.]

"Eh? What?"

[Well, um… that, go to hell with that. Although… I don't remember anything, there was still some footage, um, so I said…]

As she said so, Shidou nodded as though he understood. Kotori did indeed mention bad things about Shidou while under Miku's control.

It seems that she was mindful of it. Shidou couldn't help but laugh.

"I understand about things like that."

[Um…]

Kotori lowered her voice in embarrassment.

"That said, how did you free yourselves from Miku's control?"

As Shidou questioned, Reine replied over the speaker.

[…we had them faint temporarily, then afterwards begin purifying the area using Mana's Territory. While everybody was controlled, Fraxinus's communications were thrown into chaos. It took us some time to recover, so we couldn't contact you until then. My apologies. I'm glad that you are alright.]

"No, it's alright…"

[…but, please relax. The earphone that was passed to you, has an automatic filter that filters out sound out of a selected area. Miku's performance won't be able to spread to this side anymore.]

"I see…"

[Now, on to the main point.]

Listening to Shidou's words, Kotori coughed as she resumed speaking.

[Shidou, why are you in this area? And with Kurumi too.]

"Ah, that was because…"

Shidou briefly explained the events that happened after Kotori's group was controlled. Ellen having abducted Tohka, as well as Kurumi helping Shidou rescue Tohka, and—Tohka possibly being in the facility.

Kotori, having heard this, kept quiet for a while before—

[…no, this is too dangerous. I will not approve of this.]

A heavy voice came from the earphone. Shidou was dissatisfied with the unexpected response.

"Wha, what are you saying!? Tohka was taken away! Aren't DEM a dangerous organisation that wants to kill Spirits! Who knows what they would do to Tohka!?"

[Do you think I won't know of something like that…!]

"Then, why!?"

[How am I not supposed to prevent my brother from infiltrating such a dangerous organisation!? Have some self-awareness! You never consider about your own safety!]

"Bu… bu, but, we can't just abandon Tohka!"

[I didn't say something like that! But, we need to prepare first—]

"This is not the time to say things like that! Right now, Kurumi is helping us to delay the Wizards! We won't get a second chance like this!"

[This…]

"I beg you, Kotori! I… I will definitely bring Tohka back! So…"

[…ah, you're annoying!]

Listening to Shidou's pleas, Kotori impatiently banged her table.

[Besides, there's no point in me stopping you…]

"…you know me very well."

[I have been your sister for over ten years, after all]

Sighing in a relenting tone, Kotori continued.

[We won't be able to communicate within the office building due to Territorial interference. We also can't provide reconnaissance. All Fraxinus can do is to provide external support.]

"Mm, that's enough… I'm sorry, Kotori."

[Ugh, to have such a disobedient brother, we sure have it hard, Mana]

Mana shrugged at Kotori's words.

"Yes, but, if nii-sama were to be a useless fool who flees with his tail tucked between his legs, I won't admit to ever having such a brother."

Kotori sighed a few times at Mana's response.

[…alright. Since we are going to do it, there will be no giving up halfway. Rescuing Tohka, as well as ensuring Shidou and Mana's safety. We won't have it any other way]

Shidou nodded in response to Kotori.

Kotori then energised herself, and began.

[Then—let us begin our]

"Then—let us begin our"

Shidou and Kotori said at the same time.

[Date]

"Date"

At that, Shidou turned towards the first offices.

Part 3

Backtrack to a few hours ago, at two o'clock.

Occasionally clenching and unclenching her fist on the hospital bed. Origami let out a sigh.

Right now a lingering pain was still in her brain. Even though she had accepted the hospital's treatment of Realisers earlier, her body was just able to move. But the doctor had told her to rest, how is she going to find Shidou.

"…"

She silently turned her head right, there.

"Unu, O, Origami-san… you have already committed a criminal offense…"

Beside Origami's bed, Mikie was sleep talking in a rather rude manner.

There shouldn't be any problem since she was in such a deep sleep. Origami sat up silently.

She needed to immediately confirm Shidou's safety. Although Jessica's group, which was targeting Shidou and Tohka, had been betrayed by Mana, but she was more concerned about the revolution that Ryouko was speaking about, as long as Shidou was safe—

As she walked off the bed, Origami stopped as she was wearing her slippers.

That's right. Origami, who had been sent to hospital in a wiring suit, had no change of clothes.

What to do… just as Origami was considering, Mikie sleep talked again.

"Origami-san… no… if you eat that you'll spoil your stomach…"

She silently looked at her. She was now in her high school uniform.

"…"

Although the size was slightly different from hers, it was better than a hospital gown. Mustering all her speed, Origami placed Mikie on the bed, undid the ribbon in front of her chest, and unbuttoned her blouse. She then pulled down the zipper of the skirt, without alerting Mikie, as she was about to finish stripping her.

Then, at this point.

—WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO—

A sharp sound came from outside.

"…A spacequake warning…?"

Origami's hands had already removed Mikie's skirt as she frowned in suspicion.

"Mm… uuun… What is that noise…"

Mikie then woke up. She yawned as she rubbed her eyes. She looked at Origami sleepily.

"Ah… Origami-san. Good morni—hyaaa?"

She noticed her getup while greeting. Her body shook as her face went red and she took a blanket to cover her chest.

"O, o-o-o-Origami-san!? May I ask what are you doing!?"

"I'm stripping you."

There was no point in hiding it any further. Origami admitted to it. With that , Mikie's face turned redder than a tomato.

"Ehhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!? What are you planning to do after stripping me!?"

"After stripping you… of course, I'm stripping my clothes as well."

"Ah, aaaaaaaaaaaaahyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!?"

Mikie let out a rate animalistic cry as she used her face to press her cheeks.

Did she really hate her clothes that much. It felt like she had done a bad thing. Origami lowered her head as she returned the skirt on her hand to Mikie. Mikie's head shuddered for some reason.

At this time, a faint vibration came from the skirt returned to Mikie. It seemed that Mikie's terminal is picking up reception again.

"Ah, yes, yes."

Mikie hurriedly searched the pockets of her skirt, retrieving the terminal.

"Yes, Okamine here. …Ah, yes…yes…eh, eeeeh!?"

Mikie widened her eyes in shock. After a few exchanges, the line was cut off.

"What happened?"

"Ye, yes… that, DEM's Japan branch, was attacked by… a Spirit, and an accomplice. AST members are to deploy immediately, to reinforce DEM."

"Attacked…? What is the codename of the Spirit?"

"Ni, [Nightmare]…"

"…! Tokisaki Kurumi…?"

Listening to Mikie mention their name, Origami's vision immediately sharpened. That was the name of the Spirit that had transferred into Origami's class.

"Then, her accomplice is…"

"Thi, this…"

Mikie looked away at a loss of words. Origami held her face with her hands, and looked at her eyes.

"Tell me."

"Ye, yes… that… it's, Itsuka Shidou…"

"Shi, dou…?"

Origami muttered the name in shock—

"…!"

Then, in the next instant, with a PA sound, she rushed towards the door of the ward.

"O, Origami-san!"

But she couldn't make it in time. Mikie had managed to grab her left hand.

"You, you can't go! Don't you know what circumstances are you in now!?"

"It's alright. Although I'm not sure what happened, but as long as Shidou is there, I have to help him."

"Wha, what are you planning to do!"

"…, go to AST's warehouse. They should have spare equipment."

Listening to Origami's words, Mikie shook her head violently.

"Impossible! Origami-san's ID has already been frozen! You can't use the equipment!"

Origami frowned, as she stopped and turned to Mikie.

"What do you mean?"

"Exactly as it says! Now, don't mention about a CR-Unit, Origami-san isn't even allowed to use a wiring suit anymore!"

"…"

Origami clenched her teeth. It was indeed as expected. Having used equipment without permission multiple times, exceeding the limits of her brain to execute actions. There were more than enough reasons.

"…Then, it's fine even with normal equipment. I can still take away a handgun."

"Are, are you insane!? Walking into a battlefield between Wizards and Spirits without a Territory, is akin to death! Please calm down!"

"…that place, the most important person to me, is there. Hence… I must go there."

"Ku—"

Mikie's grip on Origami's hand tightened.

"Is that person… really that important?"

"Yes."

"Even more… than your own life?"

"That's correct."

She replied without hesitation.

"He is, the last spiritual solace for me, one who has lost everything. If he is to die, I will no longer be myself—so please, let go."

As Origami said so, Mikie's eyes sharpened.

"If I were to say, if you go, I'd kill myself by biting my tongue?"

Origami looked at Mikie's eyes before responding.

"You won't do that."

"…! Don't look down on me. For Origami-san, I can—"

"You know that if you do that, I will be very upset."

"…"

Mikie widened her eyes—and lowered her head. Then, she held her hands to her face as though she was wiping her tears.

"…I'm so jealous… so jealous of that person. Who is able to convince Origami-san to this extent."

Sighing, Mikie raised her head.

"…there's no point in me stopping you, right?"

"There is no point."

"You would go even if you're empty-handed."

"Yes."

Listening to Origami's words, Mikie laughed in sadness—as she fixed her appearance and got off the bed.

"…I understand. With this realisation, I won't stop you—but, I cannot see you die without accomplishing anything… although I'm not sure if this works, I know another method. Please come with me."

"Method…?"

Origami tilted her head in amazement.

Part 4

As the DEM wizards and <Bandersnatch> fired their magic cannons and mini missiles, they managed to hit some of the Kurumi clones in the surroundings, as well as the tiled ground and buildings around it. With every explosion, a shrieking laughter could be heard, as the shape of Kurumi's body was thrown about everywhere like debris.

But, in the midst of the explosion, black bullets were fired toward the sky, hitting the wizards in their units and the <Bandersnatch> in the brains.

It was an unimaginable and complicated fight. The wizards used all their strength, descending into the rain of million bullets at once, fighting against the limitless incarnation of a nightmare from the shadows. Both sides continued their slaughter mercilessly. If Shidou were to step into this fight, it would be difficult trying to put his body together for a funeral.

"….."

To imagine of the worst. Flying low with the help of Mana's territory, Shidou couldn't help but suck his tongue at his incredible imagination.

[—it's right here, Shidou]

Kotori's voice came from the earphone. Shidou raised his head. Mana, like Shidou, looked towards the same direction.

What was there, was a skyscraper that was taller than the buildings around it . It was at least 20 stories in height. The entrance should be the object that looked like a door. Because of the emergency, it was closed tightly by a shutter.

"Please wait."

As she said so, Mana landed to the ground. At the same time, Shidou's body which was surrounded by the Territory, has began to slowly descend downwards as though gravity has returned.

Mana put her hand on the shutter, and gripped while letting out a small sound.

Then, the roughly 30-millimeter thick shutter was crushed easily, opening up a path wide enough for a human to cross.

"Alright, let's go."

"You are still as strong as before…"

Shidou laughed bitterly as he followed Mana through the shutter.

"But, the building is indeed too big. If only we knew which floor Tohka was on…"

Shidou said in a difficult tone. A sleepy voice came from the earphone – Reine's.

[…if they were to imprison Tohka, they would need to have the required facilities to isolate Spirits. Do you remember the separating area onboard [Fraxinus]? Find a facility that is similar to that.]

"I see…"

At this time, Shidou's body was surrounded once again by a strange floating sensation. There was no question. It was Mana's Territory.

"Mana? Why did you deploy your Territory—"

Shidou didn't get to finish. As though he was pressed by an unseen hand, his body was sent flying.

In that instant. The main entrance of the first office was twisted with a scrunching sound, and his vision was filled with light again – an explosion.

"Wha…!?"

Shidou was swept up by the strong wind, rolling on the floor. The back of his head, which hit the floor, began to hurt.

But, there was no time to bother about that. Shidou raised his head as he supported himself.

"Mana! Mana!!"

"…yes, I'm all right."

Following Shidou's call, Mana flew out from the thick smoke. It seems that she wasn't injured. She must had cushioned the blow with her Territory.

But her expression was not one of calmness, but rather, nervousness and anger.

"…you, it can't be…"

Mana said in a low tone. At that point, as though cutting through a thick fog, the interior of the research facility that had a large hole open in it, stood a gigantic hulk of metal.

A large armed body the size of a large tree. It looked as bulky as a tank. And with it, a girl who was carrying all these on her back like some sort of military outfit.

Shidou widened his eyes. He had seen a similar equipment before.

"That is… [White Licorice]…!?"

Yes. What appeared here, was the gigantic equipment of destruction used when Origami was trying to kill Kotori.

But there was one difference – compared to Origami's snow-white armor, the one in front of Shidou now, was as red as blood itself.

"…so you do know about that. But, this is slightly different. This is DW-029R [Scarlet Licorice], the sister machine of the test machine [White Licorice]."

Mana said in a disgusted voice, with a face of annoyance.

"Are you trying to change your image? You looked way different from during the day. Isn't that a waste of such a disgusting face – Jessica."

As she said that, she looked at the pilot of the [Scarlet Licorice].

A red-haired girl in her late twenties, her notable trait being a pair of fox-like eyes.

But, it was difficult to see the full appearance of that face. The reason is simple, her hands, chest, forehead and face were full of bandages.

"Aha! Mana. Mana. Takamiya Manaaaaaaa? So? So? Look at my [Licorice]? With this, I won't lose. To you. Lose to you…!"

But the girl full of injuries – Jessica, laughed as she said in a stuttering tone.

"Do you know each other?"

"Former comrades. …This idiot."

As Mana said so, she stepped out.

"—Jessica! Stop the [Licorice] now! Do you understand!? You can't use that!"

"Ahahahahaha! What are you talking about? I feel so good. Because—"

Jessica squinted her eyes, as she aimed her cannon at Mana.

"I can… finally kill you now."

"Ku—!"

She understood her opponent's intention. Mana suddenly approached Jessica, activated the blade on her right hand, and began slicing at Jessica.

But, Jessica had already pre-empted Mana's action. Using her high-power laser knife on her left hand to stop the attack, while opening the missile pack on her back, firing a massive amount of missiles.

Several missiles detonated at point blank range. The area was full of the smell of gunpowder as her vision was filled with dust.

"Uu, uwaaaaaah!"

Still unable to balance himself, Shidou was blown backwards. What he could see was a green shadow and a large red machine in pursuit.

The two wizards moved their battlefield to the sky, as they began to fight. Exchanging cannons and blade blows. The dark sky was filled with flashes of magical light flashing like stars.

"Gu…"

Mana will have to handle Jessica. Even if Shidou went to help, he will just be a burden.

After making up his mind, Shidou immediately left the area, running towards the building.

[Shidou! It's too dangerous! Don't act alone! Wait for Mana!]

Kotori howled as she scolded Shidou. But, Shidou didn't slow down.

"They will only reinforce if we wait for her! I have to go now! Besides, it's more dangerous being outside by myself, right!? I could be hit by a stray bullet, or be held hostage by Jessica or one of the other Wizards! I cannot burden Mana!"

[That, that… you may be right, but! Wait… Shidou!]

Shidou passed the damaged door. In an instant, Kotori's voice was drowned by static, and soon she couldn't be heard anymore.

There was nobody in the wide lobby. What replaced was spread debris, interfering with Shidou's progress. Electrical wires were exposed from the broken ceiling, with the light hanging down. The occasional sparks were enough to cause one to feel weird.

According to Reine, there must be some facility isolating Spirits within the building. Shidou began to head upstairs.

"Ha…, ha…a, ha…!"

Second, third, fourth, Shidou ran up to the fifth floor in one breath. His legs began to feel tired, his lungs hurt, and it became difficult to breathe. But he had to continue on in spite of that.

—Tohka. Tohka was around here.

The girl who let herself be caught to buy Shidou time to escape, alone, caught by an organization against Spirits.

—At this point, Shidou didn't have the time to complain about the pain his body felt…

"…!"

At this point, he didn't know how far he had climbed. Shidou heard a strange noise, and frowned.

In the corridor, were a man and a woman. They did not look like regular employees or researchers. Both of them were wearing unknown wiring suits.

Because they were inside the building, they were only carrying a light gun-like weapon, and a small laser knife – but there was no question, they were Wizards.

"Intruders!?"

"Oi, you, who are you!? How did you get in—"

"Ku…!"

Shidou held his breath, and fled downstairs. The Wizards deployed their Territories, as they chased Shidou at an unbelievable speed. At the same time gunshots fired behind him, as the shining magic bullets opened a few holes in the walls.

"Stop! Or I will shoot!"

"Aren't you already shooting!"

Shidou howled as he fled downstairs to avoid the bullets being shot into the walls, ceiling and floor.

But, the difference in speed is obvious. In a few seconds, likely having entered their Territory, Shidou's body was pressed by an unknown force, and pushed towards a wall.

"Gu…ga…!?"

"Really… is that it. This youngster is the intruder?"

"How could that be. But, we can't just let him escape."

The woman continued to hold Shidou as she raised his other hand, while the man aimed his gun at Shidou's brain.

"Ku…"

Shidou clenched his teeth, and struggled, trying to break free.

"Tell me the truth… we don't have a choice, let's faint him first."

Saying that, the man raised his hand, and walked towards Shidou.

"…! Damn…! How can I fail here…!"

Shidou muttered as he clenched his fists and hit the wall repeatedly.

—what idea, what can he do.

Shidou continued to think. If he was captured here, he won't be able to rescue Tohka.

"Tohka…!"

Tohka's face that was carved into his memory, appeared in his mind.

Tohka. Excluding the incident 5 years ago, she was the first Spirit that Shidou met.

Tohka laughed with him when he was happy. Tohka accompanied him silently when he was upset. Tohka helped him when he was lost.

That naïve smile was the source of Shidou's courage. In fact, when Kurumi and the Yamai siblings appeared, when Shidou was lost, Tohka was always by his side.

Tohka's smile, may soon disappear forever.

At this point, a sharp pain erupted from Shidou's head.

"What kind… of joke is this—!"

A yell that would nearly rip his throat out. –in that instant

[Wha…!]

The Wizards let out a surprised sound as their vision was filled with light – at the same time, Shidou felt the pressure on his body decreasing.

In an instant, as though separating Shidou and the Wizards, he noticed a strange object floating in the air.

—A sword. Glowing with a golden radiance, a large sword.

"Wha… this is—<Sandalphon Slaughterer>…?"

That's right. Tohka's Angel. The sword of great power <Sandalphon Slaughterer>.

Now, it was floating in front of Shidou.

"Wha, wha what…!?"

"An, an, Angel…?"

In contrast to the shocked tone of the Wizards, Shidou's heart was a strange calm.

Of course, this was because he had already experienced summoning <Sandalphon Slaughterer> before.

But, with that in mind. Why would <Sandalphon Slaughterer> appear in front of Shidou now. Shidou could understand part of the reason.

"Ah—that's right. Let's go and rescue your mistress."

Shidou muttered to himself. He held out his hand, and gripped the hilt of <Sandalphon Slaughterer>.

At this point, the Wizards moved their hands, and released the magic-imbued bullets.

But, those things were meaningless in front of <Sandalphon Slaughterer>. Before they hit the sword, the bullets vanished into the air.

"How could this be!?"

Shidou raised <Sandalphon Slaughterer> without hesitation.

Of course, not to talk about swordplay, Shidou was completely clueless on using combat tactics and weapons.

In truth, if someone were to hand him a gun and tell him "use this to kill the enemy", he would only know how to use it as a blunt weapon as he did not know how to fire it, and there was the possibility of accidentally killing himself due to misfire.

—But, in this world, there was only one sword in this world.

That would allow Shidou to use as he wishes.

(—Haven't I said it before, the <Sandalphon Slaughterer> now was summoned from Shidou's wishes. The one that could use it now, is limited to only Shidou.)

As he started to wield <Sandalphon Slaughterer> Tohka's words ringed in his mind.

(Relax. And then think. What does Shidou want to do. What is Shidou's wish . Forget everything aside from that. Wield this sword as you wish. —If you do that, the Angel will surely respond.)

There was only this wish in his heart. Stronger, stronger. The wish to rescue Tohka.

Hence, <Sandalphon Slaughterer>'s light shone even more brilliantly as it summoned his strength based on Shidou's wishes.

"Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

He slashed with <Slaughterer>[Sandalphon] with a loud sound. Then, the radiant glow of the sword expanded, sending the Territory of the Wizards as well as the wall of the building flying.

"Gu, guaaaaaaaaaaaaaa….!"

Following a spell of silence, one of the Wizards was thrown out through the wall.

But, there was still one more enemy remaining. The enemy intended on fighting to the end with Shidou as he armed his laser knife and looked at Shidou . [7C 1]

"Tch…!"

Shidou raised <Slaughterer>[Sandalphon] with all his might, as he tried to block the attack . However, the Wizard clearly held the advantage in terms of speed. He suddenly lowered his body, and stabbed into Shidou's stomach with the knife, rotating it as though he was trying to cut deeper and right through his body.

"Ugaaaa…!?"

A scrunching pain came from his abdomen, as his eyes felt like they were burning with his brain.

But, Shidou didn't yield.

"You demons—don't interfereeeeeeeeeeeee!"

Shidou gripped Sandalphon with a trembling finger, as he hit the Wizard stabbing in stomach with the hilt of the sword. Although it wasn't the blade, the

Angel itself is the manifestation of Spiritual energy. As <Slaughterer>[Sandalphon] ended up hitting the Territory, it began to send out sparks everywhere.

"What!"

Not expecting the counterattack, the Wizard fell to the ground.

"Agah… uu, ah…"

Shidou clenched his jaw as he retrieved the knife with his free hand. The resulting spill of blood tainted the ground red. The pain could not be stopped as his vision gradually began to blur.

"Kah, ha…"

But, Shidou, whose face was filled with sweat, did not fall. The knife, having lost its magical energy, was thrown to the ground with a clang sound.

At the same time, bits of fire began to appear from Shidou's abdomen wound . With the protection of the Spirit of Fire, Kotori, the flame was able to let Shidou 's wound recover by itself.

But, there was no time to wait for it to heal completely. Shidou didn't wait for the flames in his abdomen to die down as he resumed walking.

Part 5

"Wha, what exactly is going on?"

AST's captain, Kusakabe Ryouko, could not believe the sight in front of her.

Because, in the office street of Kagamiyama City, there were DEM Wizards, mechanical idols, as well as multiple similar-looking copies of the Spirit [Nightmare], engaged in a fierce battle.

In an instant, it was easy to forget that this was an office street in Japan. Bullets were fired, explosions of magic. The street was nearly reduced to rubble.

—Earlier, AST who were on standby, had finally received orders to deploy.

But, it was not to subdue the Spirit that was controlling humans in Tengu Square, it was to reinforce the Japanese branch of DEM, which had been attacked by another Spirit.

To ignore the unprecedented revolution in Tengu Square, but to assist DEM instead. Although the orders were contradictory, they cannot just ignore the presence of a Spirit. Ryouko and the AST members on standby quickly rushed towards Kagamiyama City's office street, where the Japanese offices of DEM were situated at.

Ryouko breathed deeply to clear her mind, and ordered her members.

"Team, assist the Wizards from DEM, and eliminate the [Nightmare] on the ground… although I'm not pleased with this decision, this is an order. Do it well ."

"Understood!"

Obeying Ryouko's orders, the AST members in the CR-Units flew towards the sky.

For Ryouko, it was impossible to say that she fully trusted DEM. Because of them adding ten extra members without her approval and have them beginning to fight while the citizens had yet to fully evacuate, her trust over them had deviated from what it was before.

Even if so, as long as these were orders from above her, she couldn't ignore it . If she were to defy orders here, her superiors would have an excuse to punish AST. In the worst case scenario, DEM Wizards may replace the AST completely.

And, there was Origami. Knowing that Origami had defied orders completely—yet she understood how dangerously the third unit acted. Using this as her trump, she had managed to reduce Origami's punishment from her superiors. At this point she couldn't let anyone else find a way to take advantage of them yet.

Ryouko followed behind her members, activated her thrusters, and joined the battle.

Her vision enhanced by the Territory, and noticing the shadows flying in the smoke-filled air, Ryouko aimed the trigger of her laser gun.

"Kehe, hehehehehehe!"

But [Nightmare] dodged expertly, yet did not retaliate, fleeing to another location. It seemed that she was toying with her opponents.

"What is with them, these guys. What are they after…?"

At this point, she heard a strange sound. Ryouko frowned.

"Eh…?"

To make an analogy, it was similar to a sound in a tornado. Under the impression that a plane is flying past, but the sky was completely empty. And the airspace that had the spacequake alert was closed off, except for the defense force.

But, in an instant, as something that looked like a self-aware tornado passed, it raised a gust of strong wind, passing through Ryouko's line of sight in an instant.

"Wha…!"

She increased the intensity of her Territory without hesitation. As they were caught up in the tornado, a few Wizards and marionettes, as well as [Nightmare] were incapable of maintaining their balance and were sent flying.

"Wha, what was that, just now…"

In her confusion, she could not clearly tell what that was. Ryouko blinked.

But, the bullets from below sent Ryouko's consciousness back into the battlefield. Using her high-intensity Territory to repel the bullets, aiming her laser gun towards the ground.

Although she was wondering about the true identity of the tornado, the main priority now was to get rid of [Nightmare]. Ryouko activated her thrusters and re-entered the battlefield.

Part 6

"Kuwaaaaaah…!"

The hand that was wielding <Sandalphon Slaughterer> emanated a searing pain. Then the feeling of heat began to envelop his wrist – healing the exhausted hand that would soon be unable to wield the sword.

As Shidou advanced through the building, defeating the Wizards along the way, he used Kotori's powers to somewhat mitigate the strain of wielding <Sandalphon Slaughterer>.

Using a supernatural power to sustain the cost of using another supernatural power.

But, this with vicious cycle, if kept repeating, would only prove fatal for the body. Against the constant barrage of Wizards, Shidou's regenerative abilities were soon failing to catch up – and soon Shidou was forced into a predicament.

"Ku…"

As he tried to wield <Sandalphon Slaughterer>, his hand was no longer able to muster strength. He didn't release the sword, but the pain throughout his body, as his muscles had began to ache.

Shidou bit his teeth and looked at his surroundings.

There were 3 armed Wizards in front of him. 5 enemy Wizards were behind him. In total, eight of them had surrounded Shidou.

"You sure made us put in some work. But, this ends here."

The Wizards said as they held their guns. At the same time, Shidou suddenly had difficulties breathing.

"Ah, gah…"

It seems that they were either using the Territory to enclose and suffocate Shidou's body, or lower the concentration of oxygen around him. Even if they didn't use their guns, it was easy to subdue a human at close range.

Even if Shidou tried to resist, his limbs were too heavy to be raised. He then he fell onto the ground.

"Ku, ugaaa, ah, haaaa…"

His vision began to blur as his consciousness began to leave him.

"Toh, ka…"

—But, just as Shidou's consciousness was about to descend into darkness.

The area around the fallen Shidou's back had begun to sound with a cracking sound. In the next instant, the windows along the corridor began to shatter as its shards fell like rain.

"Uwaaaah!"

The armed Wizards let out a pained sound.

But, the unnatural phenomenon did not stop here. A large wind from the shattered window blew, blowing the three Wizards in front of Shidou out of the window.

"Wha…! Im, impossible! The Territory has—"

Following that, Shidou felt the temperature around him dropping.

That's right, it was as though the surroundings had become a freezer.

But, this shouldn't be a hallucination of Shidou's semi-conscious mind. In front, the Wizards' pained screams can be heard.

"Thi, this is…"

"Our Territories have been frozen…!? Disengage them temporarily!"

"Under, understood!"

At those words, the extra pressure and pain that Shidou felt vanished like smoke.

"Eh…?"

Shidou blinked as he tried to recall what happened in the last few seconds.

The window was smashed open, and a cold draft attacked. The Wizards who had their leering eyes on Shidou earlier were now in a mess.

But, in the next instant, Shidou understood.

"Hmph, this is so unsightly."

From the shattered window, appeared Miku in her elegant Astral Dress, standing on the corridor.

At the same time she stepped to a rhythm.

"<Army-Breaker (Gabriel) Diva> – [Solo]!"

Following that, a silver long round tube appeared. It seemed like it was part of the large organ.

Then, the front of the long tube began to wrap itself around Miku.

It was similar to a stage microphone used for a performance.

"____!"

Miku sang with a bewitching voice into the microphone.

The voice that entered the microphone for a few rounds, began to sound through the area.

Then, the Wizards that had heard Miku's song immediately disengaged their weapons and lined up neatly by the wall.

"Miku!"

Miku unhappily huffed and turned her face away as she was called by Shidou.

"Can you not call me such haphazardly? If it were to be called by the voice from your throat and tongue, there will be an irremovable stain on my beautiful name."

She was still the same as before, using harsh words in contrast to her appearance to attack Shidou.

Looking out, there were the Spirits who sent Miku in here, Yoshino and the Yamai sisters, who had unleashed their Angels.

"Onee-sama… what do we do next?"

Yoshino who was sticking closely to the back of her rabbit marionette said so . Miku immediately changed from a look of disgust at Shidou to a smile at Yoshino.

"Mm, that's right. The building isn't big enough to hold Yoshino, Kaguya and Yuzuru's Angels… then, please stay guard here, and don't let those Wizards interfere."

Miku raised a finger as she blinked. Then, the Yamai sisters started.

"Kuku, I see. Then we shall sweep the road Onee-sama uses to return."

"Concern. But, is it alright without everyone at your side?"

"Ahaha, no matter how strong they are, they are just humans. As a Spirit, I won't lose to them."

Miku laughed happily. The trio looked at each other, then nodded slightly.

"If Onee-sama says so…"

"Mm, I got it! Leave this area to us. From this building onwards, in a straight line, I promise we will lay out a carpet for your return!"

"Understood. Orders from Onee-sama must be obeyed."

"Oi, oi, Yoshino! Kaguya! Yuzuru!"

Even as Shidou called their names, they did not respond, as they summoned their Angels and flew off in different directions. A few seconds later, amidst the

battlefield between the Wizards and the Kurumis, lay out chunks of ice and winds.

Looking at this, Miku turned towards Shidou happily.

"Miku… you, why—"

As Shidou started, he widened his eyes.

"Don't tell me, Miku, you actually held your end of the agreement…"

"…"

Listening to Shidou's words, Miku's expression fell.

"Can you not mistake it? I, do no———t have the slightest interest in someone who has a disgusting urge to die while spouting out nonsense from his mouth. I came here, simply for adding another Spirit to my collection."

"Miku…"

Shidou muttered Miku's name as he lowered his head.

"Thank you, for your assistance."

"Hmph, as I said, I have no reason to accept your gratitude. I just came on my own accord, to take Tohka away… it's fine if you want to follow me, but don 't let me see you."

Miku shot a glance at Shidou, before walking away without a care. Shidou hurriedly followed ahead.

Chapter 9: Demon King

Part 1

Mana's vision was full of small missiles.

Needless to say, launching such a large amount of missiles in such a crowded place, not only was the target hit, but the DEM Wizards and〈 Bandersnatchwere also hit, falling to the ground.

".....you, actually hit your own comrades!"

"Hahaha! There's no way you can dodge that!"

Ignoring what Mana said, Jessica who was carrying a huge airframe, was laughing loudly.

"It seems like she doesn't even have the normal ability to analyse."

Mana continued flying, frowning in disgust.

Strong magical power, missiles, machine gun bullets and laser swords came firing and attacking continuously. Every attack she received was severe. If she let her guard down, her protective barrier could be broken.

Most likely, Jessica's brain had been modified with magic.

——similar to what Mana underwent for years, except it was done within such a short period of time.

"Kuh——"

Mana didn't know what was done to make Jessica stronger to such an extent within a day. But she clearly knew that this kind of action would inflict a fearful amount of damage to the body.

In fact, Jessica started showing signs of her body being damaged. Perhaps her thoughts were obstructed as she wanted to defeat Mana desperately, hence ignoring her comrades' safety and attacking randomly. Furthermore, she destroyed the DEM facilities around her as well.

"Kuh——"

"Mana! We will cover you! Move it!"

Kotori's voice could be heard through the speakers.

Then, Mana opened a small-sized protective barrier while the missile chasing after her exploded in mid-air.

It seems Kotori sent over several <Yggd Folium> in mine mode and blocked the missiles for her.

“Thank you, it’s a great help----“

After giving a short thanks-------however, Mana stopped talking and turned around.

Next, a torrent of cold air crossed the space Mana was at.

“This is…..!”

For a moment, she thought that Jessica had fired the Maryoku cannon again without learning from her mistake but…….that was wrong. Mana looked downwards.

Over there, there was a girl in a maid uniform attached to a giant rabbit doll.

"<Hermit>……no, Yoshino-san…..!?"

"It's an order….from Onee-sama. I will get rid, of……the Wizard-san!"

"So close, that's the way Yo-shino! Ushaaa! Freeze that girl!"

"Un……..!"

Yoshino talked with the giant rabbit-<Zadkiel> while creating several ice pillars in the sky and shooting them towards Mana.

"Wai……."

After Mana twisted her body in panic, she flew while dodging and striking down the approaching ice pillar bullets with the laser blade in her right hand.

But, to interrupt her, a tremendous wind pressure came attacking from above this time. Mana frowned her face, turned her Territory into defensive mode and flew upwards after somehow passing through the wall of wind.

"Kuku, oh well, not bad at all. You're different from those Wizard worms wriggling around there."

"Alert. Kaguya, please be careful. That's Shidou's sister. I heard she's strong. "

The twin girls holding a lance and pendulum respectively were cautiously looking at Mana.

"That's the…..Yamai sisters, huh."

Mana said that and licked her lips. It tasted like sweat.

Now that she thought about it, they are being controlled by the Spirit-<Diva > too. She heard that <Fraxinus> radars picked up winds thought to belong to the Yamai sisters heading towards the company's 1st building; it seems that they were accompanying Yoshino.

She has no idea why the girls are here. But, there was no time to think leisurely. While she was just doing that, a red silhouette was heading towards Mana after it charged through the missiles' explosion.

"You're kidding me……..!"

It's still okay if it's a normal opponent but, Jessica's brain has been tempered till it's messed up and her Maryoku has been increased to Mana's level. With 3 Spirits added into the equation, it's going to be tough, even for Mana.

"Kuh----Losing Jessica is……impossible huh. I have to divert the girls' attention somewhere else…….!"

At that moment, Mana found a group of Wizard in the air zone in front.

There was a group of Wizards wearing different wiring suits compared to the DEM Wizards. Most likely, everyone from the JSDF AST was called as back-up.

"Ah----!"

Mana opened her eyes wide in reflex when she found a familiar face.

“-----Captain!”

“Eh……? Huh, you’re----Mana!?”

The AST captain Kusakabe Ryoko replied back with a surprised face.

“Why are you in a place like-----“

“Talk later! Tag!”

“Huh?”

“I'm leaving those girls to you!”

After saying that, she activated her thrusters and passed through the space between the AST members. The members opened their eyes in surprise, maybe because they got stirred up from the wind pressure.

But, something happened a beat after they were taken back. That’s only natural. That’s because <Hermit> and <Berserk> came attacking at the same time.

“U-uwah!? Everyone, retaliate! Team A target <Hermit>, Team B target < Berserk>!”

“U-understood!”

But as expected from Captain, she dealt with the sudden situation and fired back at the 3 of them.

Maybe they felt they were going to get attacked as Yoshino, Kaguya and Yuzuru changed their targets from Mana to the AST. After confirming that by looking with the edge of her eye, Mana left that air zone.

But, there was no time to take a breather in the first place. All she had done was change the status quo of the situation that had turned into the worst scenario.

Not batting an eye to the Spirit and AST members, Jessica was approaching Mana from behind while pointing the 2 giant Maryoku cannons at her.

"MaaaaaaaaaaaaaaNaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!"

"How persistent……..!"

She moved her eyebrows closer in irritation and clicked her tongue again.

But at that moment, a feeling as if her spine was being traced with a cold finger attacked Mana.

"------!?"

For a moment there, Mana thought Yoshino and the Yamai sisters attacked her. But-----she was mistaken. This feeling only appears when a Wizard with radial Territory was getting closer, causing both of their Territory's to clash with each other.

"Kuh……..!"

The same time she noticed that, Mana quickly twisted her body and took evasion measures.

Next, a laser blade around Mana's height, passed through the space Mana was at a moment ago.

"----Oh my, you dodged it huh. Nice reaction."

With that said, the girl that appeared behind Mana out of nowhere calmly lifted her chin while saying that.

She had blonde hair which was fluttering in the sky and blue eyes. A white CR-unit was being worn over her pale skin.

Mana gasped-----

---

that was because, DEM industries prided strongest Wizard- Ellen M Mathers - was there.

"Ellen…..!"

"I heard that there was a big rat within the assailants but……it was you huh, Mana."

After saying that, Ellen looked down on Mana.

"How disappointing. I acknowledged you as the 2nd skilled personal before me, inside DEM."

"Hah…. Stop with your joke. You guys mess with one's body as you please."

After Mana said it like puking, Ellen twitched her eyebrows.

"…….I see. You found out to that extent. It seems it's true that <Ratatoskr> picked you up."

"Fuun, judging by your unsurprised look, it seems you're an accomplice huh . An idealistic scenario would have you join me and beat down the president after finding out the truth..."

"Sorry but I will not betray Ike."

"……..Like I thought huh."

Mana distorted her eyebrows while muttering in detest.-----Honestly, a woman she doesn't want to have as an opponent has appeared. The summit of the Adaptus numbers. The strongest Wizard both acknowledged by herself and others. Even though Mana was wearing <Ratatoskr>'s CR-unit--<Vánargandr>, there was no guarantee that Mana could win.

What's more, currently-----

"Disappear! <Blastark>!"

Mana looked behind when Jessica shouted and a tremendous torrent of Maryoku was shot out from the 2 Maryoku cannons.

"Guh…….!"

Even if it's Mana's Territory, there was no way there would be no damage if she took a direct hit from <Licorice>'s Maryoku cannon. After twisting her body , Mana minimized the impact by sliding on the Maryoku cannon's attack with the surface of her Territory before flying backwards to have both Ellen and Jessica fall into her view.

On her right hand, there is the strongest Wizard in white armor.

On her left hand, there is the craziest Wizard with a crimson tank behind her.

“It doesn't feel right to have a 2 vs 1 fight but----well, I can’t help it if it’s Ike’s intentions. Let’s end this quickly."

“A-ha-hahaha. Mana, Mana, I finally caught up. MaaaaaaaNaaaaaaaaa?”

“Tsk……..”

Being glared by the two of them, Mana clicked her tongue in detest.

Part 2

“-----So, where is Tohka-san? It’s a waste of time walking around mindlessly in this big building”

“Iyaa, err”

Miku asked him while they were walking in the corridor. However, it was not like he knew the specific location. Shidou spoke ambiguously in awkwardness.

“Haaa? Did you intend to infiltrate without investigating that? Eh? Is that cluster of ugliness riding on your shoulders filled with over boiled udon, just like a clay doll?”

“Muguh…….”

Actually, it was bulls-eye. He hesitated to talk.

"B-but there's no way I can easily investigate that, right…..!"

"Heee…….You think so?"

At that moment, Miku *Kashi* stopped moving after making a noticeably loud footstep and the group of DEM wizard aligned to the wall looked at Miku when they heard her song.

Within them, she picked a young girl and *Kui* bent her fingers.

"Hey you over there. Come over here for a bit!"

"Ye-yes, Onee-sama!"

The female Wizard walked over to Miku with a nervous face. When she reached there, Miku lifted her face with bewitching hand movements.

"Neee…….Please tell me. Where is Tohka-san being confined in?"

"Th-that's……..classified information……..."

"I will hate you if you don't tell me, you know?"

"N-no way! Onee-sama!"

After Miku made a smile and said that, the Wizard clung onto Miku with a face as if she was going to cry any moment.

"She's at the quarantine area on the 18 floor! I-if you use this ID, you can enter! S-so please Onee-sama! Show mercy……..show mercy!"

"Ufufu, I like honest girls"

After Miku accepted the ID the girl offered to her, she erected her index finger and touched her own lips before touching the girl's lips.

"Ah, aah……!?"

The girl made an ecstatic voice as if she ascended to heaven and collapsed powerlessly. It seems she fainted from the deep emotion. The Wizards standing at the surroundings were looking at her in jealousy and making postures while biting their handkerchiefs. The males were also taking the same actions so it was a little uncomfortable.

However, Miku did not stop to worry about the worshipers' reaction and looked down at Shidou as if she won.

"How about it? There are many ways in doing it you know?"

"……much obliged."

Originally, he should be rebuking at Miku for toying others unreasonably like what she did in the Tennou festival, but the current situation called for it. Shidou scratched his cheeks with a very complex mood.

But thanks to that, he was able to find Tohka's location and at the same time, gained the key to get to her. He nodded a little while clenching his fist and looked upwards at the next floor.

"Okay, let's go Miku."

"Like I said, will you stop thinking I am helping you? Do you understand? I am here to add Tohka-san into my army. We are enemies!"

"I-I get it."

There's a lot of stuff he could think of but, it's a fact that Shidou would not know of Tohka's location if not for Miku's presence. Shidou quietly started walking and followed after Miku.

After that, they went to the next floor and after walking for some time, they saw several Wizards in wiring suits equipped with small firearms and close combat weapons in front.

They were probably informed of the irregular existence-Miku. They upgraded their equipment compared to when Shidou was alone and the Wizards had expressions filled with nervousness.

"Shoot! Don't go easy on them!"

Together with the captain's order, countless bullets spew out from the firearms they were holding. But at that moment, Miku took a deep breath and,

"WAH!!"

She released a sound wave in front of her.

The bullets approaching them bounced off an invisible wall and sunk into the walls and floor. The Wizards leaked their dismay all together at once. She might have directed the wall properly, but the atmosphere around Shidou was vibrating too and it made him cover his ears in reflex.

“Ahaha, you seriously think you can stop me with that attack? I sure am underestimated huh.”

After Miku laughed, the faces of all the Wizards distorted with fear and gasped.

But at that moment, 2 more Wizards appeared from the back corridor and pointed their pistol at Miku’s back.

“Miku!”

After shouting, Shidou swung <Sandalphon> with both his hands. Light was shot as if it traced along the blade and blasted away the Wizards's Territory. Several bullets shot from the pistol got scattered to the ceiling.

“Guah-----“

However, the moment he released <Sandalphon>’s slash, his whole body hurt starting with the hand holding the sword. Shidou fell on his knees in reflex.

“Gua……”

“Wa-wait!?”

After clearing the Wizards at front, Miku raised her eyebrows while shouting . But, Shidou did not have the leisure to respond to her now.

The price for swinging the Spirit sword-----Angel <Sandalphon> which contained power too excessive for a human's body, several times was taking an unexpectedly high toll on Shidou's body.

But, it seems Kotori's power dwelling in Shidou's body has not forsaken him yet. At the same time a flame lighted deep inside his heart, the heat slowly spread out to the edges of his body. He could feel the flames were healing his organ damages, muscles and bones which could not be seen from outside…….. of course, this rough healing method came with the heat of hell fire.

"Uu-guh……"

Nevertheless, he could not complain. Shidou withstood the pain which was strong enough to blow his consciousness away and stood up before dragging < Sandalphon>'s tip on the corridor while somehow walking.

Miku snorted in detest when she saw Shidou in that state.

"…..How pathetic. Why do you go that far?"

"I told you already……I have to save Tohka. As long as I have no idea what is happening to Tohka, if I waste any time……..I don't have the time to stand still-----"

Shidou said that before clenching his fist------the pain when he did that distorted his face.

"Kuh……"

Miku twitched her eyebrows and purposely made an expression filled with disgust.

"Aaah-aaah-aaah-. How cold. What's with that? Did you get drunk with the thought of saving your tragic heroine? You aren't in the age to be looking up to heroes of justice."

Miku shrugs her shoulders as if to ridicule him and continued.

"Ahaha, is it perhaps that? You can't retreat because you already told me that Tohka-san's life is more important than yours? It's fine actually. I know how disgusting humans are since a long time ago so I won't be disappointed."

"……."

But, Shidou did not show any reaction and continued walking in the corridor silently.

"Wait! Don't ignore me!"

Maybe because Miku did not like that, her voice turned wild before she overtook Shidou----and, *Pon* hit her hand as if she thought of something.

"-----Aah, I know. Then let's do this. Go ahead and tell me you would give up on Tohka-san, here and now. If you do that, I will use my [Voice] and make as many girls as you like into your slaves. How about it? All of them will absolutely follow your words. Theeyyy will do anything for you? Ufufu, not a bad deal right?"

Miku gave him a deal. Shidou twitched his eyebrows.

Unpleasantness spread out inside his chest. It's not a good idea to make Miku mad now------he fully knew that but, he could not forgive her for that sentence. He glared at Miku and opened his mouth.

"…….Don't screw with me! There is no replacement for Tohka!"

"……uh."

When Shidou made a stern face, Miku made a slight twitch with her shoulders before increasing her tone as if she lost her temper.

"Fu-fuun, stop pretending already! Your [Like] or [Precious] is just at that level right? I am saying I will prepare a replacement so, that's acceptable right! Why would go that far for her…..!"

Miku said it in a forceful tone. Even if this was to tempt Shidou, there was no composure in her tone. It's as if she feels that her existence was being denied unless Shidou agreed with her.

"You're mistaken. Not all humans are-----"

"Shu-tt u-uppppp! Humans are my toys! Males are my slaves! Females are my cute dolls! All humans only have that value!"

Miku shouted to reject him.

"Miku, you……"

Shidou raised his eyebrows. The words that he missed to hear when he was inside Kurumi's shadow scratched his mind.

"Why-------why do you hate males that much! Why do you treat females like objects! Why do you see humans in that perspective…….!"

"Huh, that's obvious right? Humans are worth just that much----"

"-----Even though you're human yourself too…!"

He said it to interrupt Miku's voice.

Miku stopped her words and gasped.

"-----!?"

Miku opened her eyes in surprise and looked at Shidou. Shidou looked back at her and continued.

"When you were still human, <Phantom>---the [Something] that has the appearance of a noise, gave you the power of the Spirits…….am I wrong!?"

"……..!"

Miku twitched her shoulders. But-----she did not show any signs of denial.

That was what Kurumi told Shidou while they were getting here.

That was the information she read from the objects-----a penname CD and a photo showing ***a young Miku with a male and female thought to be her parents*** they found in Miku's house.

Just like Kotori----Miku was a human turned into a Spirit by someone.

And also, she had a past of being active as an idol with a different name.

"……..How do you know that?"

Miku glared at him with sharp eyes. That reply was proof.

"I had a well-informed friend."

There was no need to explain Kurumi's powers in detail. Shidou said it ambiguously to play it off.

Nonetheless, it's not like Shidou actually knew everything. Kurumi gained many fragmented information from reading CD and photos, and there were many things still left in the unknown.

Yes……..If Miku really was originally human---

---then why could she only treat her fellow humans as objects?

Not only does she hate males, she would even treat girls she took a liking to just as an antique doll. She won't treat humans as a living thing like her and it felt extremely strange.

At first Shidou thought that her value system became distorted because she was gifted with the [Voice] to make anyone listen to her.

But-----if Miku was human before then...

If Miku was active in human society for 10 years then..

Just what on earth could cause her to harbor such robotic emotions to humans?

"You're….a human too. Then you should----"

When Shidou was about to finish his sentence, Miku glared right at him.

"Don't joke……..Just, just what do you know about me?!"

Miku shouted hatefully. Shidou slowly opened his mouth.

"Miku…..what happened to you?"

"……Fuun, why should I-"

"Miku"

When Shidou pressed on with his words, Miku sighed in annoyance.

"How persistent. Fuun……."

After she said that-----Miku started talking in a vomiting manner.

Part 3

---Singing was the only thing I had.

That was what Miku already felt when she was 9 years old.

It was much faster to count her studies and sports results from below and it's not like she was good in art and crafts. There was only one [Not bad] in her report card during her elementary school and it did not change even when she was in middle school.

But Miku had her singing. She was better than anyone in her class, and could sing songs beautifully.

What made her start singing in the first place?……..yes, it was because she got praised by her teacher for being good at singing during her kindergarten game meeting.

To the young Miku, it made her very happy and she felt very proud as if she received a shining medal that no one else had.

It might be a normal result for Miku to start idolizing singing and dancing idols on television.

The young Miku was engrossed at the girls singing with their cute voice while dancing on a dazzling stage. Of course for lyrics, she could perfectly remember even their style and it surprised both her parents .

And once Miku reached 15, she got the attention of the judges in the audition and was able to debut as her desired Idol with the name Yoimachi Tsukino.

That was the happiest time of her life. She could stand on the place she had been aspiring for a long time. Her song, her voice could be heard by many people. Just thinking of that made her tears fall naturally.

Although her work could not be compared to before, things were going smoothly without any problems. Her CD slowly entered the charts and the audience started to increase in her lives.

The male audience crossed 90 percent of the total audience and although now that she thinked about it, this was enough to give her the willies……. but to Miku at that time, all of them were the precious audience that would tell her that they loved her singing.

She liked recording for her CDs and radio but Live shows were the most fun for her.

It was the best way to actually feel her song reaching everyone.

Everyone would praise Miku's singing.

They would say that they love Miku.

The medal placed on her chest was shining beautifully even more.

She thought that dreamlike time would always continue.

---But, demise easily came.

It happened around 1 year after Miku's debut. Around the time she was quite popular, she was told that a producer from a certain department had taken a liking to her from her office manager. If she ***got along*** with him then she would be able to get the golden regular or something like that.

Although it was not specified clearly; it was basically ***that***.

Of course, Miku refused politely.

The reason why Miku became an Idol was not because she wanted to appear in TV; it was because she wanted everyone to hear her songs.

But, after a while from that.

A scandal she had no idea about was published on the weekly photo magazine.

What were the contents?.....although she did not read it in details because of the shock she received, she could remember eye raising stuff like her past relationships, abortion experience, how she frequently attended drug parties, etc.

She found this out later and it seemed like the previous producer got involved in this. He seemed to be in good terms with the president of Miku's office and-----Miku easily lost her place in the company.

But the most unbearable thing was the reaction of her fans…….no, the people she thought were her fans.

The people that would line her up with the [I like], [I love you], [I would die for you], suddenly started changing their attitude like flipping the palm to the opposite side.

It was tough knowing that people would believe rumors spread by some unknown person and not Miku's words.

(------hey, how many times did you have sex with your previous boyfriend?)

(Abortion? That's basically killing a baby right? What are you doing even though you're a killer?)

Each time those types of comments were posted in her blog...

Each time she received heartless words during the handshake and sign events with fewer customers...

Miku's heart gradually exhausted away.

But Miku did not give up.

Yes. Miku had her singing. She had her songs. She only had her singing from the start.

No matter how much people were going to spread rumors about her, they would understand once they heard her songs.

My songs have that power.

Somewhere in her heart, that confidence with no basis at all was still there.

And thus, Miku stood on the live stage again.

But, it was no use.

Her body was controlled by nervousness and another kind of palpitation, when she saw the people crowding the arena, as some kind of scary monster.

However, she had to sing. Nothing would start if she didn't sing.

The BGM started. She brought the mike closer to her mouth. She shook her throat.

But----

(……..…! ……..!)

---*Hyuu**Hyuu* Air only came out from Miku's throat.

She was diagnosed with Aphonia due to a psychological problem.

Like that, the life of Yoimachi Tsukino easily reached an end now that she lost her singing.

Once a girl who only had singing in her life lost her voice, that girl no longer had any value in life.

She knew that from a long time ago. She understood that when she was only 9 years old.

That's why, Miku started thinking of suicide, and it was only natural for her to do so.

Any method would do. Hang herself. Or maybe, take an overdose of sleeping pills. It was also okay to jump in front a train, and she wouldn't mind pulling a razor at her hand. With just those actions, it was possible to easily dispose of a girl with no value.

But, just when Miku was about to take those actions,

A [God] appeared in front of Miku.

(----You're disappointed of humans. You think this world is hopeless. Neee, do you want power? A power big enough to change the world?)

Part 4

"I------Lost it. Once. Because of those ugly males, I lost my voice because of a psychological disorder-----the voice……the voice more important than my life……..!"

Miku spoke to herself as if to show her emotions, and talked with a face that was close to crying.

"I thought of suicide many times. But, at that time…….[God] appeared and gave me this [Voice]! The best [Voice] that will make people fall for me once I sing!"

Most likely, that [God] was the unidentified Spirit called <Phantom> that gave Kotori her Reiryoku.

"…….Is that so."

Shidou felt extremely weird of Miku who does not treat someone else as a person.

He felt her value system, and life/death perspective was far off from normal humans. It was so far that he might feel hatred to her.

When he realized that Miku might have a human past when he found the photo and CD in her house, that weird feeling expanded even more.

But----he was wrong.

Of course, he has no intentions to accept Miku's way of dealing with humans . He could not accept Miku's way of forcefully making someone obey her every word by using her [Voice] covered with Reiryoku, and act like a queen.

However, it was different. It's not like Miku thinks of humans as something lesser than her-----

She's just very very scared to treat them equally.

She will definitely be betrayed if she believes them.

She will definitely be abandoned if she goes under their care.

She will definitely be tricked if she counts on them.

That's why…….she won't expect anything from the start.

She will separate herself from humans.

She will think of humans as another type of existence.

She won't entrust anything to them.

While she was unaware of this, it was her defensive measures to them, due to her disappointment to humans, and because she once lost her precious voice before.

The producer fabricated a scandal to harass her just because Miku did not become his girl, and the fans that played with and hurt Miku's heart. She scorns those selfish males and rejects them.

She could not open her heart to girls too and could only treat them as cute dolls that won't betray her.

"That's why I hate males! They are vulgar, dirty, and ugly-----just looking at them makes me want to puke!"

Miku said it as if she was vomiting.

"That goes for females too! I don't need any other girls other than cute girls that would listen to me! All the other humans should just die!"

"……..uh."

Shidou gasped when he heard Miku shouted.

It's true that he understands Miku's suffering. It was probably tough to lose her precious voice.

But-----

"That's…….wrong! I do pity your circumstances……..! That Producer and article writer gets on my nerve! Those fans that took a 180 flip piss me off! But, that doesn't mean that you should hate other humans like them too!"

"What…….! Please shut up! All males are the same!"

"Iiyaaa, Let me tell you this! Is it really true that there is not even one person that wants to hear you're singing in the first place!? Isn't there anyone that did not get fooled by the scandal and looked forward to your singing!?"

"Such a person-----!"

At that moment, several footsteps came from the corridor in front. Immediately, several Wizards with pistols appeared.

"There they are! It's the infiltrators!"

"Be careful! One of them is a Spirit!"

"……..uh"

Shidou gasped and prepared <Sandalphon> in his hands.

It seems Kotori's flames have healed Shidou's body to the point where Shidou can swing the sword. Although there was still pain left, it was not that serious to make him fall.

But, even though the enemy was in front of Shidou, he still looked at Miku.

They had to defeat the Wizards now. But, this was the first time Miku would talk about her past. If he let this chance go, he felt that she won't bring this up again.

The Wizards fired all at once. But, all of it was bounced back from the wall of voice Miku made.

Shidou shouted while taking the chance to swing his sword.

"Miku-------you made up illusions of scary humans inside you! That feeling increased because everyone listens to your [Voice] so-----you became unnecessarily scared to talk with real people!"

When Shidou said that, Miku [Haa!?] let out a voice as if she heard something unbelievable.

"Scared……..!? That's not a good way to put it, are you saying I am scared of humans!? Forget that, we are fighting right now! Stop with the unnecessary-------Aaaaaaaaaah!"

Bullets shot from the Wizards approached them when Miku was in the middle of her words. After Miku raised her voice at Shidou, she made a wall of voice again to block.

"That isn't related! I'll say this as many times as I want! You've been surrounded by people who always agree with you and that's making you scared to have a conversation with a normal person! But-----even though you reject humans that much, somewhere in your heart, you still feel the urge to have a normal talk with them!"

"How random……..! Just what do you know!"

Miku raised her voice and Shidou swung <Sandalphon>.

Both of them quarreled with loud voices and advanced down the corridor while sometimes kicking down the Wizards that appears.

"I know! That's the reason why you wanted the human that can't be controlled by your [Voice]---[Itsuka Shiori] right!?"

"……..uh!"

Miku gasped and distorted her expression.

Yes. While Miku says that she does not want any humans that do not listen to her, she displayed some kind of weird attachment to Shiori.

"Som-something like that----"

"Also, when you started your debut again after getting that [Voice], you did not use [Yoimachi Tsukino] or any kinds of nickname and used your real name [Izayoi Miku] right!? You……Doesn't that mean you want someone to find out !? That you are here! You wanted to be acknowledged right!? By none other than those humans……..!"

Miku's face*Ugugu*…….turned red and made a hysteric voice while advancing down the corridor.

"SHUT UPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP! Quiet! Quiettttttttt! Don't talk like you know! Stupid! Idiot! Blockkheaaaad!"

It turned to insults halfway in her sentence. But, it seems her voice had dense Maryoku put into it. An invisible wall was pushed towards the Wizards that appeared in front and got blown backwards.

"Yo-youu……! Just because I hit the bulls-eye……."

"You did not get any bulls-eye! You're wrong! You're just an idiot! Idiot! Idiot! Idiot!!"

"Aaaaaah forget it…..! Like I thought, I can't leave Yoshino, Kaguya and Yuzuru to you! I will definitely seal your Reiryoku, you bastard…….!"

After Shidou shouted that, Miku twitched her shoulders.

"I won't…….I won't let you do that! If you seal this [Voice] then, again, I will------"

Miku clenched her teeth before continuing her words.

"Are you……are you telling me to go back to that again!? To the time when I can't sing…….to the time when I am worthless…….!"

"I did not say that!"

After he shouted, he swung <Sandalphon> again. The sword slash turned into light and cut up the Wizards Territory.

"I….I just want you to sing with your real voice without it covered with the power to deceive others that's all!"

That was his true feelings. Miku's singing voice that people use to hear at the Izayoi residence. She was so earnest and was brimming with a charm different from the current Miku.

But, Miku distorted her face in detest.

"Please don't talk like you know…..! If I have this [Voice], I can be the best Idol! Just who would listen to my singing once I lose this [Voice]!!"

"You got me------here……..!"

Miku's whole body slightly twitched when Shidou shouted.

"W-what…….don't spout randomly! You have not even heard me sing before anyway!"

"I heard! It's just one song though! Its earnest, filled with hard-work and cool ! I like it more than your songs now! No one would hear you sing…….? Hah, don't be stupid. -----at the very least, you will have one devoted fan no matter what happens! And that would be me!"

"Wha……"

"Your Reiryoku does not matter……..even if you lose that [Voice], it's impossible that you will become worthless…….!"

"……uh!!"

Miku made a face close to crying------however, she immediately swung her head to regain her composure.

"Those…….those words----I won't believe them! All the fans that said them did not believe me! When I was having a rough time……no one extended their hands to me!"

"I don't think so! There has to be a fan believing and waiting for you! But------if what you say really is true then! At that time I will! I will definitely extend my hands to you!"

"Don't say things that convenient…..! Then what, will you risk your life to save me if i was in a tight situation like Tohka-san!?"

Miku pointed at Shidou and shouted. Most likely------she was trying to see Shidou to be at loss for an answer.

But, Shidou shook his throat instantly without any hesitation.

"Of course!"

"…….!"

Miku stopped for a moment when she heard Shidou's words.

But, she immediately distorted her face unpleasantly and followed after Shidou.

"I won't believe you! It's going to be a lie anyway…….! It's definitely a lie!"

"Why you-----"

At that moment, one Wizard appeared in front of them when they climbed the stairs and reached the next level. It was a large male. Different from the Wizards until now, he was carrying a giant Gatling gun which was clearly not meant for indoor battle.

"Stop! It looks like you two were doing whatever you liked but, that ends here! From here on out, the building's guardian entrusted by executive chief Mathers- Andrew Kersee Dunstan Francis Barbirolli will----"

""Shut up!""

Right in the middle of his speech, Shidou and Miku shouted at the same time . The Gatling gun dented due to the strong voice and his Territory got split into half by a slash from <Sandalphon>.

"Guhah…….!"

Andrew so-and-so let out that cry as he fainted on the spot. Miku then continued talking in a manner as if she was kicking a rock at the roadside.

"In the first place, why must I even help you! Please know your limits!"

"Noo, you're the one that said you would help me!"

"Fuuun, I don't know that!"

Miku *Tsuuun* looked away. Shidou twitched his cheeks.

"Why you……!"

But, at that moment. Shidou noticed the floor was different from the others.

There was a stretch of tough looking wall and there was not even a single window nearby. It's like-----yes, a quarantine facility.

"Is this……the place?"

He frowned his eyebrows and looked in front.

A strong looking door was installed on a part of the long stretching wall.

Part 5

"Kuh……."

The situation was not favorable.

Ellen and Jessica, both who received a Maryoku treatment. Mana was probably taking on two of the most powerful opponents in DEM. If she wasn't in <Vánargandr>, she would probably have been done for a long time ago.

While flying in the sky with high speed to dodge the group of approaching micro-missiles, Mana used her Territory to confirm both of their positions. Behind was----Jessica. But, Ellen's readings could not be detected.

In the next moment, a different Territory touched Mana's Territory. Mana quickly responded to it and swung her right arm's laser blade.

When she did that, Ellen's laser edge was swung down at that position and violent sparks scattered.

"Uguh…….!"

"Magnificent response. But, do you think you would win in a power fight?"

After saying that, Ellen swung the laser blade with incredible speed.

She can't follow with her body vision. Mana concentrated all her nerves to increase the Territory's density and responded by swinging her laser edge to the area getting slashed.

But, there was not only one opponent. When Mana was dealing with Ellen's early-summer rain of slashes, a large amount of Missiles was released from < Licorice>'s weapon container-<Root Box> and was shot at Mana's back.

Instantly, a part of the missiles exploded before reaching Mana. Most likely, <Fraxinus> supported her using the <Yggd Folium>. But, the amount was too much. Several missiles escaped the chain explosion and exploded behind Mana.

"Kuah……..!"

"Kyahahahaha! Hitttttt! You caaaan't do thaaat, you muuust be careful of your bacckkk!"

Jessica's unpleasant loud laugh shook her eardrums.

Even though she has a Territory up, all of its energy was directed towards Ellen. She could not kill off all of the missiles impact. Her brain was shaken mercilessly and she was close to fainting.

But, after managing to maintain her consciousness by clenching her teeth, Mana made an order in her mind to activate the thrusters and left from the place . She had to regain her posture for now.

However. Right when Mana flew backwards, her path of escape got obstructed by an invisible wall.

"Wha…….!"

Mana opened her eyes wide------and immediately knew its identity. It was a limited Territory generated by <Licorice>. A <Licorice> type is able to generate a Territory towards someone else other than its user space.

"You're naïve you knowwww? This is the end, MaNaaaaa!"

Jessica made a gruesome face and laughed.

"Why you……looking down on me!"

Mana made an order in her mind and blasted off Jessica's Territory.

But, Ellen did not let that change go. For a moment, Ellen made an unsatisfied face because her match got disturbed, but she shook her head to regain her composure and swung down the laser blade <Caledfwlch>.

"Guh--------!"

It was not a distance where she could dodge. Mana switched her Territory to defense mode and stiffened her body in preparation for the incoming impact.

But----at that moment.

"Wha……"

After Ellen distorted her eyebrows dubiously, a shot from a laser cannon was targeted at Ellen from the right side.

Ellen used the laser blade she swung up to hit down the Maryoku light. Mana took this chance to blast off Jessica's Territory and backed off.

"That was-----"

For a moment there, Mana thought <Fraxinus> provided support but----she was mistaken.

When she looked over to the direction where the attack came from, she saw a doll-like girl with hair set to reach her shoulders floating there.

"Ma-Master sergeant Tobiichi!?"

Mana shouted in reflex.

Yes. The outsider that suddenly came rushing at Ellen to hit her was Mana's old colleague-----Tobiichi Origami.

"You okay?"

However. Mana felt a little weird at Origami's appearance. Origami was wearing a wiring suit and a CR-unit, but the suit's design was different from the usual basic AST standards.

The navy colored wiring suit had a big slit opened at her chest and she had several equipment that had no sense of unity. It's as if she forcefully gathered them because she was in haste.

"Tobiichi Origami……..? You should be having medical treatment now. And that equipment, that's not AST's----"

Ellen frowned her eyebrows dubiously and mumbled softly. However, Origami did not reply and looked at Mana.

"----Where is Shidou?"

"Eh? Nii-sama…….huh. Yes, he is safe."

After Mana said that, Origami's mouth slightly relaxed.

"Where is he now?"

"Errr, at the first building."

"I see"

After Origami made a small nod, she activated he thrusters and flew towards the 1st building.

But, Ellen flew in the sky with tremendous speed to catch Origami.

"Did you think I would let you go?"

"……I will force through."

Origami exchanged glances with Ellen and their Territory clashed. Maryoku sparks scattered around.

"Master Sergeant Tobiichi!"

After Mana shouted, she made an order in her mind to support Origami.

The difference in power was clear already. On top of that, Origami should still be damaged from yesterday's battle. It's the same as watching her get killed.

However, just when Mana was about to fly to Origami, a high powered Maryoku cannon was shot and it blocked her path.----There was no need to think who it was. It was Jessica.

"Where are you GoInG? Your opponent is me RighTtttTTttT?"

"Why you…..!"

Mana distorted her face and wriggled her right hand's laser edge.

Origami switched her posture mid-air. Maybe it's because it was a unit she was unfamiliar with, the movements were still unstable; Unfortunately it couldn't be helped. She extended her hands to her back and took the laser cannon equipped behind her before pointing it forwards from below her left side.

The wiring suit Origami was wearing right now, does not belong to AST.

<< Special Sorcery Service SSS >>--------it was the official equipment used by the United Kingdom's anti-Spirit team.

On top of that, she had an equipment set consisting of a big mouth laser cannon, an Assault Rifle set with Anti-Spirit bullets, a Gatling gun, and several types of close combat equipment.

This was the [Method] Mikie talked about.

It was a CR-unit with no ID management, which was hidden under an empty apartment.

This was something concealed by a terrorist group formed by old SSS members, who performed an assault at AST a few months ago.

All the main equipment was retrieved but-----it seems Mikie found one spare hidden in a hide-out she found.

"……..uh."

Origami fixed her posture mid-air gracefully and looked at her enemy.

When she did that, the enemy flicked her beautiful blonde hair elegantly.

"-----Tobiichi Origami. I never would have thought that you would appear."

Origami remembered the face of the girl that said that. If she was correct, it was the cameraman that accompanied them to their school trip.

Now that she thinks about it, there were several suspicious points during the school trip. Just when she was about to change her route-----a DEM mechanical doll appeared in front of Origami.

That's why, even though she saw Ellen Mathers attacking Mana, her understanding was stronger than her surprise.

"I heard that you used <Licorice> in a battle with Bayley and exceeded its activation limit causing you to lose your combat capabilities. Even though you were treated with a Medical Realizer, you should be in a condition where you should stay still. I will tell you this in my concern for you; you will die if you force yourself."

"That does not matter."

"Is that so?"

The wiring suit different from the one she was familiar with was probably hidden away from the army and it was joined with previous generation weapons which were not maintained properly. That was all the cards inside Origami's hand.

But----she could fight. No matter how hopeless the difference in strength was , she was able to point her blade at the enemy.

The opponent was a DEM wizard with the latest equipment. Origami might die here. Even though she might survive if she was lucky, she might not be able to fight any more in her life.

However, even if she turned out that way, she still had to save Shidou. Just for that reason, she does not mind to rely on any coincidence, any kind of trick or any kind of surprise move to achieve it……..!

In addition to that, the Maryoku value of Ellen's strong Territory was increasing. She was probably preparing for battle.

Nonetheless, Origami did not need to see its value. Judging by the feeling of the Territory when they clashed, she could somewhat estimate Ellen's strength.

She was stronger than Mana, who was overwhelming during her mock battle with Origami and the other AST. She had never touched such a dense Territory in her life before. If she carelessly get to a close distance then, Origami's body will definitely get stopped.

"……..!"

She made a quick move right after she made an order in her mind. Origami took the Anti-Spirit Rifle in her right hand while she took the Gatling gun on her left hand before pulling the laser cannon's trigger with her Territory and used an all-out attack on Ellen.

Her ammo was limited. Forget that, the Gatling gun in her left hand was not one of her original equipment; it was picked up beside a <Bandersnatch> filled with holes when she was heading here.

But, as long as there is no chance to win in close-combat, she had no other choice but to continue attacking from a distance. She restrained the recoil with her Territory while focusing the bullets covered with Maryoku at one point.

Not long later, the rain of bullets stopped. Of course, it was not Origami's will to do so. It was simply because she ran out of ammo.

However, after the wind blew away the film of smoke, Ellen was floating there calmly in a undamaged CR-unit.

"Did you seriously think that would work? It seems I am being underestimated."

Yare Yare after sighing in a tired manner, Ellen pointed the laser blade she was holding, at Origami.

But, at that moment, Ellen twitched her eyebrows.

The wall of a building filled with holes because of Origami's attack collapsed and was falling right at Ellen.

Yes. She did not think that the attack just now would work on Ellen from the start. Origami made Ellen focus on herself while she hollow out the wall behind Ellen.

"Fuun----"

But, Ellen did not move at all and stopped the approaching giant debris right before it reached her head.

Nevertheless, that was also within her expectations. After Origami released the connection of the Assault rifle in her hands, she filled the body of the rifle with Maryoku and threw it towards Ellen with full strength.

Of course, it was blocked and stopped right by the Territory before it reached Ellen's body. However, an explosion blasted out from the back part of the assault rifle.

"Wha----This is……!"

Ellen frowned her face and covered her mouth with her hand.

Origami attached a grenade on the rifle beforehand and set it so that the pin would be pulled out at the same time it passes her through Territory.

Nevertheless, it was not like the gas has poisonous properties. It was a teargas used to subjugate riots. The worst possible symptoms it could cause would be causing itchiness for the eyes and nose.

But, Ellen does not know that. As long as there was a chance that she might inhale a poisonous gas, Ellen either has to use her Territory to neutralize its composition or shut out the gas by re-surrounding herself with her Territory.

"Now-----"

Next off, Origami took a stun grenade from her hips and threw it at Ellen. A strong light and sound was spread to the surroundings.

She then made an order in her mind in a flash and converted the micro missiles equipped behind her before shooting every one of them at Ellen.

The Basic Realizer installed on the wiring suit was the part maintaining the Territory. And the part used to control it was none other than the human brain.

Right now in Ellen's mind, she should be multi-processing thoughts such as blocking the debris, neutralizing the gas, and blocking against the sound and light. On top of that, she was being showered with flaming micro-missiles which has Maryoku processed in it. A normal wizard would cause a mistake on one of the processing because the brain might be overheating and would accidentally release the Territory for an instant.

However.

"-----You've put some thought into it huh."

"…….!?"

Origami heard that voice from behind and gasped.

But----it was too late. The same time when she quickly turned back, Origami's neck was grabbed. The operation of her Territory levitating her body weakened and gravity pulled her body down.

"Guh……."

"Not dealing with the Territory itself but rather to cause chaos to the brain generating it……huh. I see. It's not a beautiful way but, it's effective."

After saying that, Ellen, who appeared behind Origami, strengthened the hand grabbing onto her neck.

"How sad. If the opponent wasn't me, then it would have been your win. But ------how regretful. That isn't the method to use against the world's strongest Wizard."

After Ellen said that, she raised the side of her lips and smiled.

15000 meter above DEM Japan branch. Right now an extreme battle in the office city was shown on the main monitor of <Fraxinus> bridge.

"A Wizard is approaching Mana from behind! It's at 1'o clock!"

"------Make <Ygdd Folium> No.3 and 4 head there"

"Understood. <Ygdd Folium> No.3 and 4 finished setting to Mine mode."

The same time a crew voice echoed, a small explosion occurred in the sky of the city of buildings shown on the main monitor.

"-----intercept confirmed. Target Territory erased."

No one probably noticed since it was slipped in the battle's blast and noise but, the group sent all of their automated unit-<Yggd Folium> to the ground to support Mana.

As long as their communications can't connect into the building, this was the only thing Kotori and the group could do. Even though Kotori was feeling impatient, she was performing her job with ease.

"Co-commander! Look at that!"

A voice was raised by a crew member. After Kotori looked at the monitor, the situation of the war zone was shown.

There were 2 girls floating in the sky. No-----a correct way to say it would be; a blonde girl in white armor was strangling a girl covered in a navy blue suit while being suspended in mid-air.

"That's……."

Kotori raised her eyebrows dubiously.

"Ellen Mathers is fighting Tobiichi Origami…….huh"

Kannazuki standing-by beside her put his hand on his chin and said that.

Yes. Although she was wearing unfamiliar equipment, the person being strangled right now was Shidou's classmate/ AST Wizard- Tobiichi Origami.

DEM and AST should be organizations working together. Actually, the AST joined the battle just now and they were working together with the DEM wizards to fight against the group of Kurumi.

But----she immediately recalled back.

Yesterday. In the sky of Tenguu square, an unknown AST group appeared to target the Spirit's and Origami used the Annihilation armor-<White Licorice> to prevent them from doing so.

Nonetheless, it was hard to think that the Spirit hater Origami would protect Tohka and the others. Most likely…….she moved to protect Shidou who was in the Tenguu Square.

"Don't tell me……."

Kotori looked at the monitor while erecting the rod of the Chupa Chups in her mouth.

The reason why Origami was fighting against the DEM wizard. There was only one plausible answer for that.

"-----Prepare the convergence Maryoku cannon <Mystletain>. We're going to support Tobiichi Origami."

"Is it okay?"

Kawague from the bottom bridge asked. Kotori glanced at him and made a small sigh.

"……it's a complex feeling though. Seeing her die is going to cause nightmares. Also-----no matter what reason it might be, I can't ignore someone that would try to save Shidou."

After saying that, she took out the candy from her mouth and pointed at the girl in the monitor.

"AR-008, parallel activate No.5 and 6. Start Maryoku charge. At the same time, point the 3rd muzzle downwards. Switch one part of the control to manual .----Target: Ellen Mathers."

After Kotori said that, Minowa raised her voice difficultly from the bottom bridge.

"However, commander. The target is in contact with Tobiichi Origami. Even if we lower the output, isn't there a chance we might drag her in too?"

It was a normal reason to worry. However, Kotori snorted before making a sigh.

"That's why I said this. Switch one part of the control to manual. ¬---- Kannazuki."

"Yes."

Kannazuki nodded when he heard Kotori's words.

"Prepare the headset. I'll leave the aim to you. You can do it right?"

"If it is by your orders, I could even shoot an apple riding on someone's head ."

Without a moment of hesitation, Kannazuki bowed his head down. After the crew gulped, they started operating the console under Kotori's instructions.

"-----Well then. Originally, I would like to fight you but, sorry I am in a little hurry."

Ellen said it in a soft tone while strangling Origami. She then slowly raised the giant laser blade held by her right hand and pushed it onto Origami's cheeks .

"U……..Kuh-----"

"Ike took an interest to you, so I don't really want to kill you but…….it seems you're quite smart and it's not desirable to ignore that"

After saying that, she switched on the sword's blade. While making a * Jyuuuu* sound, a sharp pain was felt on Origami's cheeks.

"Kuah……."

But that moment.

"------!?"

A sparkle like a glittering star appeared in the sky colored in darkness, and a tremendous torrent of light poured down.

"Wha……"

The light poured straight down as if it was going to suck in Ellen's head------ and the moment it touched Ellen's Territory, Maryoku light sparked around.

That's... The super high energy Maryoku cannon blast was on a level impossible for an individual's equipment. Most likely, the pillar of light excels even <White Licorice>'s <Blastark>.

"Thi-this……is……!?"

This was unexpected even for Ellen. Ellen looked painful for the first time. Maybe because she could not respond to such a sudden event, Origami could feel the power obstructing her Territory weaken.

"…….!"

Origami took the chance to turn her body and escape from Ellen's restraints.

She poured her strength into her right foot and stretched the leg. A 10 centimeter blade showed itself from there.

She then generated Maryoku on the blade and swung it at Ellen.

"Hah, guh……..!?"

Her feet felt a response and Ellen's anguish voice echoed.

In the next moment, Origami's leg was grabbed by an invisible hand and she was thrown towards the building's wall.

"……..!"

She could not decelerate and slammed at the wall. Although she somewhat killed off some of the impact, it made her cough violently.

"*cough**cough*……."

"……now you've done it."

Having survived through the mysterious Maryoku cannon, Ellen frowned her eyebrows in detest while looking at Origami.

Her wiring suit was torn from her chest to her stomach and a painful wound was carved on her white skin. Maybe she managed to stop the blood with her Territory, but the blood that splashed out when she got the wound left a red bloodstain on her white armor.

Ellen pointed her sword at Origami.

"Even though an unnecessary interruption got in, you are the 2nd human to ever hurt my body……..Tobiichi Origami. You are a wonderful Wizard. Be proud of yourself.----However, you will have to do so in the next world."

"Kuh……"

Origami was floating in the sky while supporting her painful body with her Territory. Even though she managed to return a blow, the hopeless difference in power got opened even larger.

But, after Ellen twitched her eyebrows, she moved her sights as if she was concentrating her consciousness on her ear.

"---Ike"

She then glared at Origami one more time before facing towards the 1st building.

"…….! Where are you-----!"

"It appears time is up. You're lucky."

"Tsk, I won't let you……!"

Shidou is in the 1st building. Origami made an order in her mind to chase after Ellen.

However.

"----Origami!"

The same time Origami's name was suddenly called, Origami's body was wrapped by somebody's Territory and it caused her to slide in the sky with high-speed.

Next off, a torrent of cold air passed through the place where Origami was at . It would have probably froze together with her if she stayed there just now.

"Kuh……!?"

"You…….what are you doing here! You have to be resting!"

After saying that, Origami lowered her sights to see the owner of the Territory that saved her. A woman wearing a familiar wiring suit was there. It was Kusakabe Ryouko.

"Captain…….?"

"Yes. Rather, what's with your equipment? The SSS……..?"

"…….Let go. I have to go after her-----"

Strong wind and ice attacked them as if to interrupt Origami's words. After Ryouko slightly brought her eyebrows closer, Origami operated the Territory and escaped from the attack.

"On-onee-sama's orders are absolute…….!"

"Kuku, you dodged it huh. However, that's why this is worth doing so! Don't bore me humans!"

"Sigh. Master Origami is there.----This is a war zone. Please run away quickly. If you don't listen to me then……we will get rid of Master Origami too."

In the sky there was a girl clinging onto a giant rabbit and behind her, there were girls with only one wing growing out behind them, dancing. Origami gasped. That's the Spirit <Hermit> and-----the students that enrolled into Origami's next door class, the Yamai sisters.

"Kaguya, Yuzuru----no way, you two were Spirits……?"

She shook her throat in surprise but, it seems the other side did not care about Origami's discomposure. After the Yamai sisters covered the Lance and Pendulum that they were holding, they shot a cluster of wind at Origami and Ryouko.

"Kuh-----"

Origami left Ryouko's Territory and activated her thrusters to dodge the attack.

"Kaka, not bad."

"Consent. However, we won't hesitate if you are going to fight againt Onee-sama."

The Yamai sisters glared at Origami.

Origami swallowed her saliva through her dry throat in uneasiness and fought the Spirits with Ryouko.

Part 6

---He used the ID and the door opened.

With Miku, Shidou was on full alert before stepping into the room.

Behind the walls, the structure of the room looked quite similar to <Fraxinus >' quarantine area. Inside the wide gloomy research block, there was a space covered with reinforced glass.

"……..!"

He opened his eyes wide. Tohka was inside there.

Maybe she was sleeping; her face was facing downwards while her hands and legs were restrained to the chair.

"Tohka!"

Even though he shouted, it seems she could not hear his voice from there. Most likely, its structure was the same as the one <Fraxinus> has.

Then that means, there should be a way to enter that area by fiddling with something from this side. He moved his sights in the room.

---and.

At that moment, Shidou stopped.

Inside the research block he thought was empty, there was one man, sitting on a chair while facing his back towards Shidou and Miku.

"Kuh-----"

Shidou sharpened his eyes without lowering his guard and pointed <Sandalphon> at him. Maybe Miku noticed the man's existence too, she got cautious and got <Gabriel>'s pipe ready.

"----Yaa I have been waiting. Can I take you as……..<Princess>'s friend?"

The man's voice echoed softly before he stood up from the chair. He then faced towards Shidou and Miku in a casual manner.

"This is my first meeting with you. My name is Isaac Westcott from DEM industries."

After saying that, he narrowed those sharp eyes.

He has a dull ash blonde hair and a tall body. His raptor-like sharp eyes was also characteristic.

Shidou slightly raised his eyebrows, when he saw his face and heard his name.

“Isaac…….Westcott."

Yes. Isaac Westcott, DEM industries management board director. If anyone watches TV, reads newspaper and net news, it’s probably a name they have heard of at least once.

Westcott made an exaggerated nod.

“Glad you came. <Diva> and----“

And. The moment Westcott moved his sights from Miku to Shidou, he stopped his words.

He made a blank face for a moment before frowning his eyebrows in a doubtful manner.

“Who…….are you? Don’t tell me……no, it’s not possible…….”

Westcott put his hands on his mouth as if he was thinking of something. Shidou did not understand the meaning of his actions and replied back while bringing his eyebrows closer.

“I am----Itsuka Shidou. I came to save Tohka! Let Tohka go now!"

While shouting, he pointed <Sandalphon> at Westcott.

At that moment, Westcott opened his eye wide.

However, it looks like he was not horrified from having an Angel pointed at him. After a while of seriously looking at Shidou as if he was engrossed-----

"Itsuka----Shidou. You're...."

Not long later, he started chuckling.

"……..Kuku, a boy that is able to use the Spirit's power……..I've heard about this and thought it was impossible but, I see, so that's how it is. Kuku, haha-hahahahahahahahaha!"

Shidou increased his alert at his sudden change and re-griped <Sandalphon> 's handle.

However, Westcott did not care about it and laughed loudly after he twisted his body.

"Isn't this funny. In the end------everything was on the palm of ***her*** hands huh."

After he did that, Miku standing beside Shidou, talked in a disgusting manner.

"……..What's up with this guy? Isn't he nuts? Aaag, that's why I don't like males."

"I don't think that's related to males though……..."

Shidou replied back in a fed up manner before looking back at Westcott.

"I don't care if you want to laugh loudly. More importantly----Let Tohka go! "

While shouting, after Shidou thrust <Sandalphon> at him, Westcott moved his shoulders happily.

"If I don't comply then, what are you going to do?"

"…….sorry but, I will force you to comply."

Westcott chuckled when he heard Shidou's threat.

"Can you do it?"

"……I can. I will do anything to save Tohka."

After saying that, Westcott shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm joking.-----I am not strong like Ellen. I'm so scared to fight a Spirit and a boy who can use an Angel at the same time."

After saying that, Westcott operated the console near his hand.

Like that, the soft motor sound echoing in the room turned softer and the surroundings turned brighter. Next off, the chains restraining Tohka's hands and legs opened up.

"Tohka!"

It seems his voice passed through the glass and reached inside. When Shidou shouted, he saw Tohka, who was sitting on the chair raised her face.

"Shi……dou……?"

Tohka then raised her body and scratched her eyes to get rid of her drowsiness before looking towards Shidou's direction.

"! Shidou!"

She finally noticed Shidou's call out was not a dream. Tohka energetically stood up and while she pulled off the electrodes that were stuck into her body, she ran towards Shidou.

She then pushed her forehead and both her palms at the reinforced glass while making a face as if she was going to cry any time soon.

"Shidou……Shidou, Shidou!"

"Ou…….Sorry Tohka. I made you wait."

Tohka swung her head after she heard Shidou's words. Seeing that gesture, Shidou unintentionally relaxed his lips.

It seems she was safe. Nevertheless, it's not like his goal has been achieved. Although both their voice and appearance reached each other, both of them were still separated by the glass wall.

"Oi, you. Open this"

"You have that splendid trophy there. How about cutting it down by yourself?"

Westcott said it while shrugging his shoulders. Shidou brought his eyebrows closer in irritation.

"……..Miku, can I count on you?"

"Fuun, I don't like being instructed by you but, it looks like this man the is person in charge right? Then I'll specially listen to you. I was going to make him hear my [Voice] sooner or later anyway"

After saying that, Miku took a step forward. No matter how stubborn a person is, Miku's [Voice] will make anyone to do her bidding. It probably isn't difficult to make him remove this wall.

But, maybe Westcott has no knowledge of Miku's ability, he made a calm smile.

"Aah-----oh yeah yeah, I forgot to say something. Itsuka Shidou-----"

He then slowly opened his lips.

"-----It's dangerous to stand there."

"Huh……..?"

Not understanding the meaning of Westcott's words, he replied back in a suspicious voice.

"Shi-Shidou! Behind you!"

But, the same time Tohka's raised a shout across the glass,

Zobuu together with a weird sound, a hot feeling was formed at Shidou's chest.

"Eh-----?"

For a moment, he did not understand what happened and let out a dumbfounded voice. After slowly looking downwards----Shidou finally noticed the blade of the laser blade coming out from his chest.

"Wha----Thi- this is……..."

The same time he difficultly released his voice, a large amount of blood spilled out of his mouth.

When Shidou somehow managed to turn his wobbly sight behind, he saw a Wizard wearing a white CR-unit behind him.

"E-l-len……."

"----I will break every sword pointed at Ike."

Ellen said it in a bland manner unthinkable from someone that caused a critical wound on another person just now, and pulled the sword of light out of Shidou's chest.

"Ah-gah……."

At the same time, Shidou became unable to maintain his posture and leaned against the wall. He then made a trail of blood while collapsing towards the ground.

"Shidou! Shidouuuuu!"

*Gan**gan* a sound of impact echoed. It seems Tohka has been slamming on the glass many times. But, it was difficult to reply to her. His consciousness was controlled by extreme pain and he could not move his body properly.

"Oyaa……It's rare to see you injured."

"I lowered my guard.----most likely, <Ratatoskr>'s airship is up in the sky."

"Houuu……?"

Within his hazy consciousness, he could hear Westcott and Ellen's conversation.

"He was manifesting an Angel so I attacked him but, was it okay?"

"Aah-----, I don't mind. Rather, I think this is more convenient."

After saying that, Westcott looked to Tohka who was slamming on the glass.

Shidou's body hasn't received Kotori's protection----the flames that can heal the wounds he receive. Actually, there was a small flame licking the wound on his chest.

However, maybe because Ellen's Territory was present, or that his heart was pierced through, or maybe it was overused many times already, the recovery was slower than usual. If he takes one more attack in the head or his chest again with the laser blade in this condition, Shidou would reach his recovery limit and would head straight to hell.

"Toh-ka----------"

Shidou somehow extended his hands to Tohka-----but he was blocked by the glass wall and his hand fell to the ground while leaving a trail of blood.

"Aa-----"

After Tohka got dumbfounded, she stared at the scenery happening in front of her.

Shidou who came to save her, got stabbed through his chest and fell forward.

An insane amount of blood was left on the glass wall and he was not moving anymore.

"Ah-ah-ah….."

A feeling of her sight getting covered with pure darkness covering her view assaulted Tohka.

She experienced this feeling once before.

It happened around 5 months ago. The day Tohka had her first date with Shidou. On that day, during the time Shidou covered Tohka and collapsed from receiving a bullet shot from Origami, colors disappeared from her emotion; it was that feeling.

"Shidou……Shidou…….Shidou……!"

Tohka slammed on the glass while calling Shidou's name.

She shouted while strongly clinging onto her consciousness so that she would not lose herself. If she was correct, she heard before that Shidou has Kotori's recovery abilities. That is why he was saved and even for this time too, he should be safe. Flames will definitely lick his wounds and he would smile at Tohka again.

But Westcott looked at Tohka as if to trample over Tohka's hope.

"Okay, Spirit. <Princess>. Yatogami Tohka. All the actors are here.----I am thinking of killing your precious Itsuka Shidou."

"Wha----!"

"You are free to prevent that. I will not disturb you. Use all your power and stop Ellen's blade. Use your Astral dress, and Angel-------if that is not enough, then extend your hands further for more."

"What…what are you saying….."

"You will understand soon.----Ellen."

After Westcott held up his hand, Ellen Mathers slowly moved beside Shidou.

"----Is it really okay, Ike?"

"Aah. It's true that I am interested in Itsuka Shidou but------the one in my priority list is <Princess>. Worst scenario, even if he really dies, the Sephira crystal probably won't break. That's okay too in a way."

"Is that so."

After saying that, Ellen held up the laser blade she was holding.

"----------ah!"

For a moment, Miku standing in the room released a beautiful voice, but all it did was make Ellen frown her eyebrows. Westcott, who was protected by Ellen's Territory, was giving off a cool face.

"It's no use, <Diva>. That level won't charm me."

"Wha……."

Dismay covered Miku's face.

After Ellen looked away from Miku, she looked down at Shidou and poured strength into the hand holding the laser blade.

"Wha-what are you doing……?"

For a moment, Tohka could not understand what Ellen was trying to do and shook her throat.

No, in reality, she really does understand. Even though she understands, her mind was refusing to understand it.

That's because, if she swings that sword down, Shidou will really die.

Shidou will.....

The fun days she had with Shidou.

Shidou who taught the beauty of the world to Tohka when she was in an abyss of despair.

He won't move anymore.

He won't talk to her anymore.

He won't smile to her anymore.

"A-aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa-----"

The moment she realized that, Tohka started stomping on the ground unconsciously.

"<Sandalphon>----<Sandalphon>…….!"

She shouted and slammed on the glass which was enough to make her bleed while stomping on the ground.

After she did that, Tohka's body gave a pale glow and-------a dress made of light manifested around her uniform.

Astral dress. One of the factors that makes a Spirit a Spirit and it's the strongest armor.

And next off, the angel <Sandalphon> manifested in Tohka's right hand.

But----for some reason, the brightness was not bright like usual. Actually, no matter how many times she slashed, she could not cut down the invisible wall separating her from Shidou.

"Why……why----why…….!"

Over and over again, she hit the wall with the sword. But----it was useless.

Ellen brought her left hand up to accompany her right hand holding the handle of the laser blade being held up.

"Stop! Stop! Please Stop…..! Not that----not Shidou….! I don't care what happens to me! I will do anything! I will listen to anything! That's why……. that's why, don't take Shidou away from me…….!!"

But, Ellen did not bother to listen. She clenched her arm muscles.

Tohka swung <Sandalphon> up and slash the wall with a force enough to break her arms. But------it did not even crack. Her power was clearly not enough .

---The Angel is not enough.

"Stoooooooooooooppppppppppppppppppppppppppppp!"

Anything will do. With a face covered with tears, she shouted like an animal. She doesn't mind if it's not an Angel anymore. She doesn't care as long it's something that can break this predicament and save Shidou. Anything will do. No matter what happens to this body she don't mind as long it's something that can slice down this wall and defeat Ellen……..!

---The sword glowing with light was swung towards Shidou's neck.

"

Uwaaa

Part 7

A loud alarm echoed in <Fraxinus> bridge.

Kotori twitched her eyebrows when she heard the sound.

That's------normally something that wouldn't be used. That's the highest level of emergency announcement.

"What's going on!?"

She looked up at the monitor while saying that.

But, Mana was still fighting a giant unit and there was nothing out of the ordinary shown in the screen. At the very least, she could not see anything that would cause the highest alert alarm to ring.

And after Kotori brought her eyebrows closer dubiously, she could hear Shiizaki, who was operating the console leak a [Hii].

"What's wrong?"

"A-about that……"

Shiizaki's fingers were trembling a little while she looked at Kotori.

"Co-commander…….<Fraxinus> observation device is not in full performance……that's not it right?"

"Haa? What are you saying? The one's having problems are related to communication right? Hurry up and answer already----just what is happening"

When Kotori said that, Shiizaki gulped before moving her lips.

"Ca-category E……the Reiryoku value is in the minus…..!?"

"Wha----"

Kotori opened her eyes wide when she heard those words.

As if to match with that action, an abnormality started to appear in the outer image shown on the sub monitor.

The upper part of the building Shidou and the group was at, made a dark glow and------that light spread out towards the sky.

"……..no way."

The worst situation happened.

The thing she was scared of just turned into reality.

"The inverse……..of Sephira.....!."

Kotori groaned and crushed the chupa chups with her teeth.

"Hahahahahahaha! Hahahahahahahahahahahaha!"

The moment Ellen was about to swing her sword to Itsuka Shidou's neck, Westcott made a loud laugh at the scenery happening in front of him.

Suddenly, <Princess>-Yatogami Tohka's body turned black and she glowed in darkness; in the next moment, a torrent of pure darkness particles flowed out from her and melted the reinforced glass like mud before passing through the buildings walls and windows, scattering in every direction.

"Ike, this is-----"

Having stopped her hands from being too surprised, Ellen asked him blankly. Westcott mumbled with words filled with emotions that can fill his heart.

"The <Kingdom> has inversed. Well then, prepare yourself humanity."

He spread his hands.

"----It's the arrival of the demon king!"

Chapter 10: Slaughtering Tyrant

Part 1

"Ahahahahahahahahahahahaha!
Diediediediediediediediediediediediediediediediediediediediedieeeeeeeeeee!"

Along with the wild laughter, several hundred bullets were fired through the air.

Mana increased the strength of her Territory, attempting to guard against the concentrated gunfire.

But, in that instant, Jessica created a limited Territory around Mana.

"Tch—"

Mana clicked her tongue in an annoyed tone, as she twisted her body, and cut open the Territory with the <Wolftail> on her right hand.

But in this instant, Jessica has already finished charging her Maryoku cannon . She fired the giant cannon <Blaster> at Mana.

"Naive!"

But then Mana condensed her Territory, as though she was sending a stream of Maryoku towards Jessica.

She then raised the <Wolftail> and hacked towards Jessica.

Jessica then changed the defensive properties of her Territory, as she parried Mana's strike. The clash between a Maryoku blade and a Maryoku shield resulted in a clash of shocking fireworks.

But then, abnormalities began to show up on Jessica's body.

"Eh…!?"

As though she underwent a convulsion, her breathing was blocked and blood began to flow from her nose and eyes, as the Territory around her began to weaken.

The weakened Jessica's Territory is no longer capable of blocking Mana's laser sword. The blade began to slice open the crimson <Licorice> as the laser sword and Maryoku on the right hand was destroyed.

Mana hardened her face and retreated from Jessica.

"…You have hit your limits. Jessica! The outcome has been decided! Surrender—"

But, Jessica aimed her remaining cannon at Mana, ignoring her words. Then, she fired a blast that didn't look like she had hit her limits.

"Ku…"

Mana dodged the cannon's blast by a hair's width as she glared at Jessica.

Then, Jessica laughed maniacally as her blood began to flow from her eyes.

"—MANA. MANA. TAKAMIYA MANA. I, I, I, I, I WIL, WILL NOT, LO, LOOOOOOO, SE. THIS TIME, I WON'T LOSE. I WON'T LOSE AGAIN. AS LONG I HAVE <Licorice>, I WILL, I WILL, I WILLLLLLLL"

Her unfocused eyes continued to twirl as she repeated the same words repeatedly like a broken record. It was clear that she wasn't herself.

"Jessica…"

Mana bit her lips and clenched her fists.

Although the exact conditions were unknown, it seems her brain was treated with Maryoku. She had compressed decades of her life to that day today. It was understandable that she would have become stronger.

Mana looked at Jessica with a troubled and pitiful expression, before sighing lightly.

She then silently placed a hand on her chest.

—She had already heard it from Kotori and Reine, that her body had been through the same procedure.

One mistake, and she could end up like Jessica.

"…"

Mana went silent as she clenched her teeth.

"MANA! MAMAMA, MANA. TAKAMIYA, MANA. ADEPTUS TWOOOO. YOU WERE ALREADY THIS ANNOYING. WHY, WHYYYYYYYYYY WOULD WESTCOTT-SAMA AND OFFICER MEIXAZ RELY ON YOU EASTERNERSSSSS??? I, I, I… I AM DEFINITELY MORE SUITED, SUITED. AAAAADEPTUS, NUMBER TWO, TWO!"

Jessica yelled as she began her berserk rampage.

But Mana did not dodge, as she spread her Territory and approached Jessica slowly.

"…You were already like this from the beginning. You are jealous, materialistic, only because you would always say such hateful words."

She said so in a low tone as she shortened her distance. Even when she saw Mana approaching, she did not leave, and continued firing her cannons wildly.

"AH, AHAHAHAHAHAHA, MA, MAMAMAMAMAMANANANANA?"

Jessica looked at Mana with eyes that are incapable of focusing as she opened her ammunition cartridges and fired a stream of bullets.

Mana advanced through the storm of bullets, activated the laser sword on her right hand, and sliced open Jessica's chest.

"Ah, gah, ah, ahhhhhhhh!"

She cut through the Territory, passed through the wiring suit, as though she cut through a body. But Mana did not look back.

The Territory surrounding Jessica began to disappear, as the large mechanical frame of the <Scarlet Licorice> began to fall towards the ground.

Jessica, held by Mana's Territory, began to purge a large amount of blood as she made a weak sound.

"He, he, he, hey, Mana? I, I, I, I, I'm strong nowwww, right? I won't, lose to anyone anymoreeeee. Master Westcott will, finally, approve of meeeee, right?"

"…Mm, of course."

As Mana replied, Jessica made her final smile, as she slowly lowered her head.

"…."

Mana closed Jessica's eyes as she carried her body, and looked towards the main offices of DEM.

"—Isaac… Westcott…!!!"

Part 2

"…!"

Shidou collapsed into a puddle of his own blood, as he looked at the sight in front of him, his wound being consumed by a flame.

At the moment Ellen stabbed Shidou with the light saber, Tohka let out a hysterical yell – before her body was consumed by a mass of dark particles.

"Wha…, what in the…"

The flames had finally healed the wound on Shidou's chest, as he suppressed the urge to vomit, allowing his mouth, full of the taste of iron, to move.

There was clearly something suspicious.

Behind him, an excited Westcott appeared to be saying something, but it was impossible to hear what he was saying. No, to be precise, even if it was possible to hear his words, it would not be possible to comprehend the meaning behind it.

Compared to that, the change to Tohka's body was much more apparent to Shidou.

There was a reason for it. There is a massive difference between now and when Tohka deploys her limited Astral Dress and Angel.

The inauspicious dark light that covered up Tohka's body dissipated with a glow.

At that point, Tohka's full figure became visible to Shidou.

"What…"

But, when Shidou saw Tohka's full figure, he couldn't help but hold his breath.

Tohka was in her Astral Dress, surrounded by a black glamour.

Even so, this is something that is not impossible. Even if a Spirit's powers are sealed, there is still an invisible bond linking them, causing a partial backflow of their powers when their emotions become unstable.

In fact, beginning from Tohka, Yoshino and Yamai may also occasionally defy Ratatoskr's intentions and partially summon their Astral Dresses.

But, what Tohka was wearing now was definitely not her partial Astral Dress.

Black armor on her shoulders and waist, and a black spectral veil covering her chest and lower half.

There was no question. It was a complete Astral Dress made from a heavy amount of Reiryoku.

"Astral, Dress…"

But, the Astral Dress that Tohka is wearing now, was completely different from what Shidou remembered. To make an analogy, it was like the base of a photo.

To add on, there was something else that was more pressing – Tohka's expression.

It wasn't the Tohka that was crying for Shidou earlier – there was simply a supernatural sense of oppression, as though she was a monarch.

Of course, there was no change to her body or face physically. Despite that, Shidou felt that the girl clad in a black glamour in front of his eyes was a completely different being from Tohka.

Then.

"That… is…"

Shidou shakily raised his head, speaking in a surprised tone.

The right hand of Tohka, clad in a black Astral Dress, was wielding a giant sword.

"Sandal…phon?"

No – no. That sword was clearly different from Sandalphon.

It was a large sword with a single blade. The hilt of the sword, stained black like Tohka's Astral Dress, as well as the blade of the sword itself, left a trail of darkness in the sky.

"—"

A chill ran down Shidou's back as he inhaled sharply. For some reason, the sword possessed not just the danger of being a sharp weapon, or a Spirit's massive power, it also possessed something frightening enough to make someone's body shiver in fear.

"……"

Tohka surveyed her surroundings carefully. Then, she let out a sigh.

"—where, is this place."

"Eh…?"

Shidou frowned. What exactly is Tohka talking about.

Tohka acted as though she didn't notice Shidou's confusion, as she continued to look around the area, before pointing at the nearby Miku.

"You. Answer me. Where is this place?"

"Eh? The Japanese branch of DEM Industries… isn't that so?"

"I have never heard of this place – then, why am I here?"

"Huh, weren't you captured and brought here by the Wizards from DEM?"

Miku turned towards Ellen and Westcott with a confused expression. As though following her line of sight, Tohka also turned towards them.

Then, Westcott's face revealed a frightening expression.

"Incredible. This is the first time I've seen such a perfect Reversal. –Look at this, Tohka. That is the fruition of our dream!"

As he said so, he patted Ellen's back.

"Alright, it's time to get to work. Finally, the enemy for you to defeat has appeared. Go, my strongest Wizard. Now is the time to dethrone the tyrannical queen, and become a stepping stone to our greater heights."

"—mm, I understand, Ike."

As she said so, Ellen nodded, and her body disappeared like the mist.

In the next instant, Ellen appeared above Tohka, and attacked with her laser sword.

"…!"

Shidou continued in his crouching position, trying to warn Tohka about Ellen's attack. However, he had lost his voice due to shock.

But, there was no need to worry. Without turning, Tohka simply raised her right hand, and blocked Ellen's attack with her sword. At the moment the two's weapons met, a large explosion occurred, strong enough to send Shidou flying to the wall.

"Ku……"

As the brunt of the impact was on Shidou's wound, Shidou twisted his face and let out a pained wail. Miku hurriedly came over.

"Oi… are you alright!"

To even be worried about a man, it was extremely untypical of Miku. It is possible that she is also in a panicked state.

But it was nothing notable. Shidou himself was unable to comprehend the sight in front of his eyes. It might have been much more acceptable to say that it was an illusion.

"Lawless."

Having parried the attack, Tohka said in a low voice as she sent Ellen flying. Ellen's body spun before she regained stability and stopped in mid-air.

"This is so much different from the stuttering [Princess] earlier. If not, it would be troubling. It would be meaningless if it was a Spirit that could be easily dispatched by me."

"…what are you doing. You fool. Why do you raise your sword against me?"

"My apologies, but I'll need you to die here. What we seek are your abilities. Your character is just but a hindrance."

Ellen's eyes sharpened as she stated so, and she raised her laser sword again, jumping towards Tohka.

Tohka's left hand moved to the hilt of her sword as she parried Ellen's strike.

But, Ellen's vicious attacks didn't just stop there. From the left, from above, from below, she continued her assault at a blindingly fast speed.

Shidou was left speechless as he watched the light of the laser sword dance in the air. To compare with the Ellen he had known up to now, there was a significant difference in attitude and speed. To fire off multiple attacks in an instant, a Tohka in a limited Astral Dress would have been defeated by the first blow.

Despite that, Tohka was not inferior to Ellen at all. She was able to parry every attack that was fired with an inhuman skill level.

A battle between one that isn't human, and one that is a superhuman. Even though Shidou himself was not involved, it was clear that he was crushed by an atmosphere of strong hostility and killing intent.

"—There!"

At this point, Ellen moved upwards from below Tohka, flipping up Tohka's sword. In that instant, a large opening appeared in Tohka's stance.

Of course, the same applied to Ellen. But then, Ellen moved backwards slightly, modified the shape of the weapon on her left shoulder, as it extended from her elbow. At the same time, the tip of the weapon began to gather energy.

"Pierce, [Rhongomiant]."

In an instant, the weapon began to unleash a blinding flash.

It was a flash of light imbued with concentrated Reiryoku, thick enough to possibly be able to burn someone's eyes if they were to look directly at it. It simply isn't comparable to the weapons used by the AST – this was a weapon that could easily match the power of an Angel. In an instant, Tohka's body was devoured by the light, and the walls and ceiling of the building were blown apart like a piece of paper, and the remnants would continue to spread through the air.

That was slightly different compared to a cannon. To be more precise – it was a ray.

A ray of light that spans several hundreds of metres, obliterating everything in its path, its large figure standing in the sky above.

Then, Ellen slowly exhaled a breath and the gigantic ray disappeared with it. As for the building, the entire walls and ceiling of the upper floor was completely destroyed, giving the impression that it had been chewed off by a giant.

"Tohka… Tohka!?"

Shidou continued to call Tohka's name as he looked around his surroundings, but he couldn't see Tohka anywhere.

Could she have been obliterated by that ray – a terrifying thought like that swept through his mind.

But, that theory would soon be disproved the moment he saw Ellen glaring furiously at the sky. From the building, the view of the sky was widened due to

the destroyed roof. Tohka was calmly surveying the area, with her back against the moon, a faint glow from her Astral Dress that was fluttering in the wind. It appears that she has parried the attack with her sword. There was no trace of injury on her body.

"…I see. So it appears that you're more than just talk."

Tohka silently slanted her eyes as she slowly raised her right arm with the sword.

"Don't think you've won just yet!"

But, Ellen didn't just sit there. She raised her laser sword again and approached Tohka in an instant, slicing towards her body.

"Hmph."

Tohka frowned slightly, and instead of using her right hand with the sword, she used her empty left hand to parry the attack.

Even Tohka's Astral Dress was incapable of fully parrying that blow. The strong remnants of Reiryoku scattered to the floor like sparks, while Tohka's right glove was destroyed at the same time. A burning injury was rapidly expanding on her slim hand.

But then.

"—[Nahema]"

Tohka said in a cold tone as she ignored the injury on her arm, as she moved down the sword that was pointing high towards the moon — [Nahema].

She wasn't just aiming for Ellen. She was also aiming for the man at the top of the building, Isaac Westcott.

"Tch—"

At this point, Ellen twisted her face and immediately halted her attack, and flew back to the building.

Following a sound strong enough to slice wind, it was followed by a crushing noise from the air.

In the next instant, the traces from Tohka's sword began to generate a powerful shock wave.

"Uu, uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!?"

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa–!"

Shidou and Miku let out a shocked cry as they were caught by the shockwave.

Even so, it appears that Miku had managed to inject some of her Spirit abilities into her cry. An invisible barrier formed around Shidou and Miku, mitigating most of the impact from the shockwave.

"Are, are you alright, Miku…!"

"Mm, mm… that said, don't, don't get the idea that I intended to save you! This was just a coincidence!"

As Shidou said so, Miku turned away with a face of displeasure.

But, if it wasn't for the sound barrier created by Miku, it was likely that Shidou would have been blown away by the shock wave. Shidou's face went pale at the state of the damage of the building's walls.

"Is that really… Tohka…? That is—"

Shidou looked at the black silhouette in front of him, with a face of fear.

With a crushing sound similar to something collapsing, Ellen, shielding Westcott underneath the rubble, came into view. It seems that at the moment before Tohka attacked Westcott, Ellen had already blocked the attack with her Territory.

"My apologies. Thank you for the help, Ellen."

"It's alright. I can't let you die here."

Ellen looked at Tohka, as she answered Westcott.

"What do you think of the [Princess]?"

"Mm, it's impossible to compare with the Spirit that we battled before. Although we were disappointed then, it can be truly said that she is an AAA-rank Spirit now."

"I see. So—are you capable of winning?"

"Of course. A being capable of defeating me, does not exist in this world."

Ellen answered without hesitation. However.

"However, that is under the assumption that I am well enough to fight."

Having heard these words, Shidou looked down, as he swallowed a bit of his saliva.

There was a deep gash from Ellen's chest to her abdomen, and she was bleeding heavily.

"I was careless while defending her attacks earlier, causing my wound to re-open. I've already applied the pain suppressants, but fighting that Spirit would be a hassle in my current state."

"Hm… is that so."

Wescott put his hand to his chin as he sighted.

"Then we don't have a choice. Let us retreat now. There's still time to slowly savor the feast."

"Wouldn't that be problematic?"

"No. I'm already used to waiting. It's already an impressive feat that we've managed to Reverse the [Princess]. And today—I've actually seen an unexpected face too."

As he said so, Wescott looked at Shidou. Shidou felt a chill go down his shoulder.

"—in that case, we will be taking our leave. Survive until the day we meet again. Takamiya—no, Itsuka Shidou."

"Eh…?"

Shidou frowned at Westcott's words.

Takamiya. That was the surname of Mana, the girl who claimed to be Shidou 's true sister.

"Wait, you, you know about me…?"

"No, nothing—nothing about Itsuka Shidou."

With that, Westcott moved his line of sight away from Shidou, and placed his hand on Ellen's shoulder.

Then, in an instant, the air around Ellen began to shake with a bang. It appears that she has concentrated her Territory.

Then, Ellen used an invisible hand to hold Westcott, levitating him, as she fired up the thrusters and flew off towards the sky at an astonishing speed.

"Ah… oi, oi!"

The cries were meaningless, for the duo were engulfed by the night, and vanished, leaving Shidou's voice echoing in the darkness.

However, even with the enemy retreated, the crisis is still not over. Shidou looked up again.

After seeing Ellen and Westcott leave, Tohka looked down, and descended upon seeing Shidou and Miku.

"Next would be… you two."

She said with a cold glare towards them. Against a Tohka that was definitely unlike her usual self, Shidou's body stiffened immediately.

"…wait, weren't the two of you friends? That said, this girl didn't seem to be in need of your help. What's going on?"

Miku asked in a low voice. However, Shidou was at a loss for words.

"Even if you say so… I don't know what's going on either."

"…aside from that, wasn't your chest pierced right through? How are you still alive?"

"About that… let's just say, it's a special property. I'll explain to you later."

Even so, nothing could be solved just by idle chatter. Shidou began to strike up a conversation with Tohka.

Then, at that moment. Tohka slashed the <Nahema> on her right hand, and a shockwave was generated towards the duo.

"Uwa!?"

"Kya!"

Shidou was caught up in surprise and had to parry the attack with [Sandalphon]. Although he was still standing, there was an intense pain that began to spread from the two hands wielding the sword's hilt.

"Tch…"

Shidou felt a shudder. Although it appeared nothing to Tohka—the attack earlier was intended for Shidou.

If the attack wasn't blocked with [Sandalphon], Shidou would've likely been killed from the impact.

"So that's [Sandalphon]… why do you wield an Angel?"

Tohka's eyesight narrowed as she said so. It was an expression that was clearly hostile.

"Tohka! What… what's wrong with you! Do you remember me!?"

Tohka started to frown as Shidou shouted.

"Tohka…? Are you referring to me?"

Tohka stared intensely at Shidou. Indeed, it was unlike the usual Tohka. It wasn't just limited to Shidou, she could not even remember her own name.

"What is… going on…"

Shidou tilted his face in confusion. At this point, his right earpiece began to emit a static noise, before it was being followed by Kotori's voice. It appears that the jamming has been removed with the destruction of the building's roof.

[Shidou! Shidou! Answer me! Shidou! What happened!?]

"I don't know! Tohka began acting weird after I was stabbed in the chest! Is that also a backflow of Reiryoku?"

[No–I'm afraid not.]

"Then, what should we do? Is it possible to seal Tohka's power!?"

[That… I don't know. There isn't a precedent. Before that, it's currently impossible given her affection levels for you.]

"In that case, what should we do…"

[We'll just have to pull her consciousness back here. If there is a possibility–]

At the mention of "possibility", Shidou's eyebrow suddenly twitched.

"I see… in the end, I still have to do that."

[What are you blabbering about?]

Tohka let out a cold voice, as though she was interrupting Shidou and Kotori 's conversation.

"–Hmph, although I don't understand what you're on about, but that doesn't matter. I'll just finish you straight away. You don't seem to be as strong as that woman earlier."

With those words, Tohka lifted up her greatsword and charged at Shidou.

"Kuwa…."

Having barely parried the first strike, but in the next instant, Tohka waved her greatsword again, attacking Shidou, whose hands were numb and unable to move.

"Ku–"

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

Just as the attack was about to connect, Miku let out a loud squeal, creating an invisible barrier, barely blocking the attack.

"Miku…!"

"Please don't get the wrong idea. Haven't I already said it? I hate those men who say [love], [important] and [to the end], yet they'll just as easily eat their words."

"Eh…?"

"You, haven't you said so? You'd try to rescue Tohka even if it'll cost you your life. Then, carry that responsibility to the end. Don't… disappoint me. I… I came here to witness that."

"Miku–"

Shidou looked at Miku, and then nodded firmly.

"Yes… you're right."

Shidou began to grip [Sandalphon] with renewed strength as he glared at Tohka.

"Alright, Tohka. It's almost morning. Let's go home and eat. If you apologize now, I'll make you your favorite dishes for breakfast, lunch and dinner."

"…What the hell are you talking about?"

Tohka tightened her eyebrows in shock. Shidou sighed slightly and ran towards Tohka. But at this instant, Tohka waved her greatsword. Although it was parried with [Sandalphon], Shidou was knocked back to his original spot.

"Ugu…!"

"What are you even doing–. That was cringeworthy."

"Shut up, we don't have any better ideas! We have to approach her first, or we can't do anything…!"

Listening to Shidou's words, Miku huffed as she touched her eyebrow.

"So as long as you can approach Tohka, you'd be able to do something?"

"…, yeah, that's right. Although I can't say it will be successful, we won't know unless we try." "Mm–hmph… is that so."

Miku answered, uninterested. Then, she twirled once, as though she was dancing, and then stepped on the ground with her foot.

"[Gabriel] — [Rondo]!"

Then, as though it was clustering Miku, several silver tubes appeared from the ground, and all of them were facing Miku as though they were microphones.

No, it wasn't just that. Metallic tubes began to appear from throughout the destroyed floor, with their heads bent and facing Miku.

"…it's okay. I'm just doing this for once. I'll be giving you, the blockhead who is stupid enough to run in here unarmed to rescue Tohka, just one chance."

"Eh…?"

"I'll use a defensive voice to pressure Tohka from all around. While I cannot say for sure how long can I hold her, but her movements should be halted for a short while. In that time, you can test what kind of method you intend to use."

"Miku, you…"

"Do you want to try? Or not?"

Miku said in a no-nonsense tone. Shidou glared at Tohka, before making a step forward and nodding his head.

"Let's do this!"

"Then, I'm beginning–"

Miku leant backwards to take a deep breath.

"_____"

She let out a resounding, high pitched sound into her Angel's organ that surrounded the entire area.

[Gabriel]'s tubes caused Miku's voice to resound in the area, as though an unseen hand had grabbed Tohka. Tohka's hands were held unnaturally and bound to her body as though it was being tied up.

"Mou–what, what the hell is this."

Tohka frowned in displeasure, and began to exert strength in an attempt to free herself. At this point, Miku's voice increased by a few octaves due to the pain.

"Mi–"

Shidou stopped the urge to call out for Miku, as he regained his footing.

There was no meaning in calling for her. In fact, it will just waste the valuable time that Miku is buying.

Then, Shidou could only advance. Tohka stepped on the floor violently with her foot. The floor's material disintegrated instantly, and the pieces flew towards Shidou like shrapnel.

"Kuwaaaa–"

Although some of the material was blocked by [Sandalphon], his body was soiled by mud everywhere. A sudden pain caused Shidou to nearly pause temporarily.

But, he can't just stop for something as trivial as this. He protected his face with his hand, resisting the incoming pain from the impact, as he continued advancing towards Tohka.

Then, with a “tch”, an annoyed Tohka clicked her tongue.

“–Annoying.”

With that, Tohka inhaled deeply, and slowly moved her body forward, gripping her wrist as though she was trying to break free of her musical bonds.

“——!?”

Miku’s voice continued to lower–and then.

“—”

Miku opened her eyes in desperation.

She had intended to increase her power to resist Tohka, to increase the strength of her bonds–at then.

At this point, she couldn’t let out any sound.

“–, –!”

Words formed in her mouth, but she couldn’t vocalise it for some reason. There was only a raspy sound from her throat.

“Wha…!”

“Hmph.”

Shidou’s panicked voice and Tohka’s annoyed voice came simultaneously.

At the moment Miku's voice stopped, the silver tubes of [Gabriel] would collapse, as the sound barrier binding Tohka vanished.

It appears that she has overused her power. In a day alone, she had an unprecended usage of her [Voice] and her Angel. Besides that, she had been fighting Tohka, a Spirit several magnitudes stronger than her, and she was barely binding her with her sound barrier. It was not unexpected for her to lose her power and voice temporarily.

"Hmph. Acting smart, I see."

Tohka huffed as she raised [Nahema].

–it wasn't aimed at Shidou, but rather, at Miku.

"Wha…!"

Shidou held his breath. He still hasn't gotten to Tohka's position.

"You'd dare to constrain me. Do you not know your limits?"

With that–Tohka struck with her sword.

"_"

Even if she tried to shout, she couldn't vocalise anything. Miku smiled weakly, as she didn't even make an attempt to dodge, merely remaining in her original spot. No… to be precise, she lacked the strength to even dodge.

To think that in an instant, Miku would meet her end at the blade of [Nahema]. Although her Astral Dress was still intact, it was unlikely for it to survive the next blow.

But then, that was unavoidable.

From the start, Miku was useless outside of her singing. She had absolutely nothing aside from that.

Hence, a Miku without her songs, voice and music was worthless.

Nobody would love Miku without her [Song]. Nobody would protect Miku without her [Voice]. Nobody would believe Miku without her [Music].

She was already aware of that since the start.

To think of it, there was a high possibility of this occurring. Having infiltrated into this Wizard-infested building. In fact, it was her own fault for running into here on her own accord.

She had already gotten three Spirits under her command, and she should have been using this time to enjoy herself. Why did she even come here?

Miku asked herself–before silently smiling.

That's right. It was for that man. Itsuka Shidou.

The man who would sacrifice his own life for Tohka, the very type of man that Miku hated. She came, to witness his resolve, or his tragic end.

She was shocked when she heard that Itsuka Shidou had appeared at the Japanese branch of DEM Industries. To think that he would actually ignore his own safety to rescue Tohka.

–Truthfully speaking.

Even if it was just once, Miku wanted to see for herself.

It was because Miku had utterly lost hope in mankind, in men.

She wanted to see, a human, who would love someone from his heart.

Shidou, he has yet to give up.

To get back the person most important to him, he would put his life in great peril, yet not stop.

If.

If only, Miku had met a man like him earlier.

Even if she had just a small portion of the love he had for Tohka.

–I could've, walked a much different path–

With a sound that couldn't be vocalised, Miku slowly shut her eyes.

But.

"Miku–"

Just as Shidou howled, a large sound came from ahead, causing Miku to immediately reopen her eyes.

As Shidou shouted Miku's name, his direction changed subconsciously.

It wasn't a calculated decision made because he cannot reach Tohka from that distance.

It was because, purely, he had wanted to help Miku. His body moved due to that.

The only thought he had, was to not let Miku die.

And–not to let Tohka kill Miku.

But, this attack was different from the previous, as though that was merely a joke. It was impossible to completely parry the blow with just [Sandalphon].

With just the power in Shidou's hand, he was too weak to protect Miku.

There was– there was, something else he needed.

If only, he had the strength to protect Miku…!

–At that moment when Shidou made his wish.

"…!?"

There was an icy feeling, on Shidou's left hand.

Part 3

"Eh……..."

Suddenly. While flying in the sky on <Zadkiel>'s back, Yoshino who was in battle with the AST wizards let out her soft voice.

The moment she was about to shoot a pillar made from condensed vapor in the air to the wizards, an odd feeling that felt like a light layer of curtain

surrounding her consciousness got taken away or a tree rooted in her mind got extracted, attacked her.

"Just now……eh? Eh?"

After a beat, Yoshino opened her eyes in surprise and looked around.

---What was she doing?

That fundamental question filled her mind.

No, she understood. Yoshino has manifested her Astral dress and Angel-< Zadkiel> to fight the AST. But…….for what reason.

"Uu……"

She got a slight headache when she tried thinking about it. [Yoshinon] dwelling inside <Zadkiel> then let out her voice dubiously.

"Huh……? Yoshino. Why are we here again?"

"Y-Yoshinon too……?"

"Uuuun, it's like, a hole popped open in my mind. I remember watching the Tennou festival stage event……..bu-bu-but"

[Yoshinon] started giving off weird sounds and shook it's giant body as if it was feeling itchy. Yoshino opened her eyes in surprise at [Yoshinon]'s sudden state.

"W-what's wrong, Yoshinon"

"Hnnnn, no, somehow, I felt a different weird kind of feeling compared to the other one just now……."

"A weird……feeling?"

"Yeah yeah. It's like you know. Like my power getting sucked away?"

"…….?"

Yoshino tilted her head in wonder.

But, they didn't have the leisure to have a conversation. The reason was simple. The AST who were cautious of them all fired their Gatling gun at her.

"Kya------"

"Wa-wa-wah!"

The same time Yoshino lost her breath, [Yoshinon] moved through the sky with sliding movements and barely dodged all of it.

But of course, the attack did not end there. A group standing by behind her was pointing their laser canon at Yoshino.

"Okay, fire!"

The same time the female that might be the captain raised her voice, all of the Wizards pulled the trigger.

However, faster than them for an instant, strong wind pressure attacked the AST members who were ready with their weapons.

"Guwah……..!?"

The 10 meter giant condensed big typhoon of crazy energy scattered the AST members to all directions along with their Territory. The Maryoku light fired by the laser cannon extended out to the ground and sky which was unpopulated.

"Kaka, how lukewarm! Too lukewarm! Getting blown away must mean this. Well, it's harder to believe to block our <Raphael>'s attack!"

"Question. Are you okay, Yoshino, Yoshinon"

After saying that, the girls who caused the wind flew in the sky to Yoshino.

"Kaguya-san……..Yuzuru-san!"

After Yoshino called their names, the sisters who were wearing the same maid outfit as Yoshino, nodded in response.

But, there was one shadow who charged at the Yamai sisters even after she got blown away. It was a girl wearing a different suit than the other members----Origami. She rushed at the both of them while swinging her laser claw.

"----------!"

Although, it seems that her body was already in shambles. After Kaguya [Fuu] shot a cluster of condensed wind, Origami took it at her stomach and bends her body in a < shape.

Yuzuru gently supported Origami's body when it was about to fall to the ground powerlessly.

"Confusion. Master Origami. What is……..."

"Shi-dou……"

Origami did not answer Yuzuru's question and lost consciousness after leaving those words.

After Yuzuru looked troubled, she flew towards the AST members who were blown away just now while carrying Origami and carefully handed over her body to them before flying back to Yoshino and Kaguya.

"W-what……are"

The captain who received Origami asked suspiciously.

But, Yoshino did not answer her. They were the ones that want to ask what was happening here.

"-------and, I have one question to ask Yoshino. Why are we here?"

"Consent. I thought we were at the Tennou Festival hall"

It seems that the Yamai sisters also can't grasp the current situation. They thought they were able to get some kind of information but-----

And.

"…….!"

Yoshino, the Yamai sisters, and also [Yoshinon] dwelling in <Zadkiel> all looked up------they looked up to the top of the biggest building in the vicinity.

Within the war zone filled with explosions and Maryoku spreading around, a louder explosion and strong Reiryoku wave was confirmed.

"J-just now……..."

Yoshino looked up and mumbled blankly--------The Yamai sisters who were making the same face as Yoshino looked at each other.

Part 4

"Ah------"

Maybe she recovered after a moment of rest; she leaked her voice.

However, Miku had something more in concern. Before her most important voice, her consciousness was taken away by the event in front of her.

Shidou went in between Miku and Tohka to block an attack from <Nahema> .

---Up his raised left hand, he made a barrier described as a wall of cold air.

"……..!?"

The surrounding temperature dropped and white mist were floating around. It might be the effects of Reiryoku; small crystals of condensed water were floating in the air and were melting when it touched Miku's skin.

Miku has seen this before somewhere.

Yes------it is quite similar to Yoshino's Angel <Zadkiel> power.

"Yo…….Miku, you okay?"

After saying that, Shidou took a glance at Miku.

"waa, aee-----"

She said it with her voice which she still can't use properly yet. When she did that, Shidou who survived <Nahema>'s attack, dispersed the wall of cold air while opening his mouth.

"I----promised"

"Eeh……?"

Miku brought her eyebrows closer at Shidou's words----and twitched her shoulders.

She recalled the conversation she had just now in the building.

(----Then what, will you risk your life to save me if i was in a tight situation like Tohka-san!?)

(Of course!)

It's true that Shidou said that.

After Miku placed her hands on her mouth, her whole body started trembling.

Tears fell from her opened yes.

"Ah-ah……"

He protected it. This person did. Shidou did.

He protected her. Miku. The [Voice]-less Miku. The Miku who should have lost all of her value.

He protected it. That small promise------!

There was a numb feeling in the depths of her throat. Miku was sobbing softly while unconsciously extending her hands to Shidou's hand.

Her finger touched Shidou's hand. Why? Even though it's the body of a male that will make her feel like puking even with a finger touch, nothing displeasing was coming up when she touched Shidou.

And. Miku noticed something off there.

Tohka who released that attack just now, was pressing her forehead with her left hand and was groaning painfully.

"U-uu…….Shidou……..Shidou……."

"……..?"

Miku heard Tohka groaning words and slightly frowns her eyebrows.

Tohka certainly said [Shidou] just now. Perhaps, her memories came back……?

However.

"Uu-A-Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!"

After Tohka shouted, she stabbed <Nahema> held in her right hand into the ground and swung her left arm at the blade.

"A-guh……"

A huge wound was formed at the left hand which has its Astral dress torn off by Ellen's attack, and blood was flowing down profusely. It seems that Tohka finally calmed down because of that.

No, calming down might be a wrong expression. Tohka glared at Shidou with bloodshot eyes and pulled out <Nahema> which was wet with her own blood.

"Such trickery……! Are you trying to mislead me, human!"

After saying that, Tohka kicked the ground to fly up to the sky and swung her giant sword up to the sky.

"Understood-----then with this attack, I will obliterate you without even any dust left!"

A mysterious ripple appeared in the void when she did that and a giant throne several times taller than Tohka appeared from there.

The throne then separated in the sky and started covering the sword Tohka was carrying.

Each time the throne fragments fused, black particles would scatter around while the giant sword turned bigger and malicious.

When the last fragment fused with the sword----

The tip was thrust to the sky as if it was going to cut the moon.

"----- with my [Paverschlev]……!!"

Tohka made a roaring declaration.

<Nahema>'s true form appeared.

"That's……!"

Shidou opened his eyes wide when he saw that.

Tohka gripped the sword handle stronger. When she did that, black particles started concentrating around the space of the giant blade.

"……..!"

Miku gasped and tried to make a voice barrier. But, she hasn't recovered enough Reiryoku to use her Angel------even if she was able to achieve it; she didn't think she could block that attack.

"……uh"

She can't let Shidou die without doing anything. Miku hugged Shidou's body as if to cover for him and faced her back at Tohka.

"Miku……!?"

"……, ……!"

Shidou shouted but, Miku did not get away.

Even she does not understand her own actions.

But, it's just obscure. She just doesn't want to break her promise with this boy.

She wants Tohka to be saved-----yes, that's what she thought.

Nonetheless, she could understand with one look of that tremendous Reiryoku poured in that sword. Most likely, the attack that's going to be shot now will be an incomparable destructive attack that will slice everything in view . It's not something that Miku's small body can block. Miku's body will probably evaporate together with Shidou in a moment later.

"Disappear, human…….!"

Tohka shouted and swung her sword glowing darkly at Shidou. only that action caused echoes of creaks at the surrounding space.

But-------

"……!?"

Before Tohka could finish swinging her sword.

Miku felt the surrounding temperature drop even lower even though it was already low.

"<Zadkiel>……..!"

"Alright, let's do this!"

The same time a familiar voice echoed, torrent of cold air attacked Tohka.

"Kuh……..?"

Tohka frowned her face and made a Reiryoku wall around her to offset the attack.

When looked over, they saw Yoshino attached to a giant rabbit floating in the sky.

"Tohka-san……..! What happened to you……..!? For you to attack Shidou-san is just…….!"

Miku felt something off from Yoshino's words----before opening her eyes wide.

She probably got released from Miku's control when Miku lost her voice.

And.

"…….eh?"

Miku left Shidou's body at that moment.

It's because Shidou's body started generating heat like a flame.

"Damn you------how impudent……!"

Tohka blocked the wind and cold air attack while preparing with [Paverschlev] and frowned her face.

While looking at that scene, Shidou gentle pulled Miku's body off because she came in front to cover Shidou.

A glowing sword of light <Sandalphon> in his right hand.

And in his left hand------a shield of cold air <Zadkiel>.

Yes. When Tohka released her attack at Miku, Shidou manifested the Angel of cold air in his left hand like what he did with <Sandalphon>.

"Ah……..uu…….!"

Miku pulled Shidou's sleeve. It seems that she was worried about him.

But, he has to go. Shidou smiled at Miku.

"…….i'll be going now. To save the princess. -----To protect my promise"

"Aah……"

After saying that, Miku quietly let go of her hand and nodded.

No matter if it's Yoshino; it seems that it's hard to completely pressure the Tohka now in her Limit release form. Shidou's body will most likely get blown away the moment he gets close.

But, why? Shidou was looking up at that Tohka in an oddly calm manner.

Was it the influence of continuous use of Angel with his body; his whole body hurts as if it was torn into pieces. And, <Efreet>'s flames were running around inside his body to allow him to somehow move his messed up body. Normally, the crazy pain was enough to make him mad.

But, Shidou's legs did not stop at all. He was slowly but certainly getting closer to Tohka.

"----Tohka"

"……!"

Tohka twitched her shoulders in fear when Shidou called her name.

But, Tohka swung her head with to get it off and shouted before raising her giant sword and swung it down.

"<Nahema>----[Paverschlev]!!"

It was in an instant. Shidou's view was covered in darkness.

---a sound that sounds like the sky splitting echoed nearby.

Next off, everything touching the extension of the sword Tohka was swinging, caused one line.

It has reached, the building with one part scrapped off, the ground shown below, the buildings lined up unfolding down there and the mountain visible at the furthest back in view.

And, the Reiryoku wave passed through that line and obliterated every existence in the line.

It's neither a joke nor a metaphor. Everything touching that torrent of black Reiryoku were compressed, pulverized, turned into particles and disappeared into the wind.

"……!"

Miku, who was lying on the building floor, lowered her body to prevent getting blown away by the after-wind of the slash which was passing by in front of her while letting air out from her throat.

The building, city, and ground formed a straight line of nothingness. Yoshino was in the sky; she probably got blown away by the after-wind when Tohka swung <Nahema>.

But, no matter how much she looks around. She could not find Shidou there.

The place Shidou was standing just now was gouged out deeply and turned into a giant crevasse.

"…….! ……!"

Miku raised an inaudible voice to call Shidou's name.

However, there was no reply. Either he was erased by [Paverschlev]'s attack or he was swallowed by the building's cracks. No matter which one it is---- Shidou was gone.

"Fu-----haha-hahahahahahaha!"

The moment Miku dropped her palms on the ground, Tohka's loud laugh echoed up in the sky.

"He's gone. He's gone. Finally-----he's gone. The cunning and crafty human that was misleading me…….!"

Tohka shouted that out and spread both her hands.

After Miku clenched her teeth, she glared at Tohka with a sharp gaze. But----her eyes opened wide in surprise there.

"--------"

Further up the moon floating in the sky behind Tohka.

"Fuun, what are you talking, my kinsman. Aren't you still missing a step to take pride in victory?"

"Protect. I am deeply in love with our foresight if I say so myself"

---Shidou was wrapped with the wind produced by Kaguya and Yuzuru and was floating in the sky.

It was a weird floating feeling. Even though he gone through a 15000 meter in one go with <Fraxinus>'s teleporter and he was made to move in high speed because of a Spirit-------getting covered with dense wind while flying in the sky was his first experience.

The moment Tohka swung [Paverschlev], Kaguya and Yuzuru appeared from the building shadow's and just barely saved Shidou. It seems that, they saw this coming from the start and was hiding.

"Sorry and thanks, both of you"

"Kaka, don't sweat it. This is easy for us"

"Consent. Your safety is all that matters.----more importantly"

"Yeah, counting on you two"

Kaguya and Yuzuru nodded at Shidou's words before maneuvering [El Re'em] and [El Nachash].

They then threw Shidou to Tohka along with the wind barrier still covering him. No-----dropped might be a better way to put it. Shidou's body which was covered with the wind was falling quickly like a ball towards Tohka.

"------Wha"

Tohka probably noticed Shidou approaching and looked above.

"Why you-------so you were still alive……!"

After saying that, she released [Paverschlev] and swung <Nahema>.

Was it because she can't perform repetitive shots of [Paverschlev], or she judged that she won't make it to complete gathering power. No matter which one it was, it was still undeniable fact that it's a fatal attack to Shidou.

"Kuh-----"

There was 30 meters left. Judging by the falling speed, he would probably reach in a few seconds.

But that instant was too long for Tohka. Before Shidou could reach Tohka, she could probably swing <Nahema> and split his body in half easily.-----but.

"--------ah"

For some reason, only for a moment there. Tohka, who swung <Nahema> up , stopped.

The Spirit, who swung her sword up, suddenly got controlled by a sudden feeling that passed through her mind.

The moment she saw the human holding <Sandalphon> falling above her head, a fragment of a buried memories cut into her consciousness.

“This scene, where have i-------“

---Seen this before.

The moment she recognizes that, her memories--------scenes which she was supposed to be unknown to her, started showing out in her head one after another.

A Spirit swinging a giant sword upward. And a boy falling down the sky calling a name.

(TooohkaaaaaaaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAaaaaaa—!!)

“Toh------ka…….”

The name echoed in her memories.

If she’s correct. That name was the name the human approaching now from the sky, used to call her.

Tohka. Tohka. It's a word not familiar to her. But, that------

"Kuh……."

Instantly-------a sharp pain rain through her mind.

And in that instant gap.

"-----Tohka!"

The boy falling down from the sky was closing close to her.

"Yo, Tohka. I came to save you"

"You…….!"

She made a grim face and poured strength into the hand holding the sword. But, he was completely in her chest area. It's clear that the boy can pierce < Sandalphon> into her chest faster. She gritted her teeth in reflex and prepared for the pain.

The Angel. He threw the only weapon that can injure her away into the sky.

But, the boy performed an action beyond her expectations.

And at the same time too, the cold air swirling around his left hand dispersed.

Basically, he became completely defenseless in front of an enemy.

"You, what are------"

"It hurts…….holding this right?"

After the boy said that, he hugged her while making a somewhat nervous face.

"Wha…….you-----"

Without understanding the boy's intentions, she frowned her eyebrows. But, she couldn't finish her sentence.

The reason was simple. The boy was pushing his own lips onto her lips.

Her head was in chaos at the sudden event.

---What is this guy doing? To his enemy. In a battle. A kiss? For what? To take me by surprise? Then why would he throw his sword? I don't understand. My view is getting fuzzy. My consciousness is getting blurry. [Shidou] Shidou? That name grazed my mind and it's making me fall even more in chaos. My head is dizzy. Fragments of [Shidou]'s face which were buried were [Shidou] coming out. [Shidou], it's like this body isn't mine [Shidou] at all. [Shidou] that name was devouring my consciousness. [Shidou] I feel disgusted each time that name echoes [Shidou] but, it doesn't feel so bad. [Shidou] Aah why did I forget. He was the one who named me. [Shidou] he was the one that flipped my existence-----

"-----Shi-dou……..?"

Tohka's throat vibrated and called the boy hugging her.

And to match with that, the dark Astral dress covering Tohka, and the sword she was holding, turned into particles and melt into the air.

She wasn't that shocked though. Those don't belong to Tohka. It's only normal that Tohka wasn't wearing them.

"……..ou"

After a short answer, Shidou smiled in relief------he then went limp like that. She quickly hugged his body tighter.

But, it wasn't a necessary worry. A wind veil was formed wrapping around both Tohka and Shidou and was slowly transporting them down to the ground.

Within that mysterious float, Tohka looked around her. The building with its upper part blasted away, and the line of city buildings separated in half. Yoshino and the Yamai sisters nearby and Miku lying down on the ground.

She doesn't understand anything at all. When Shidou was almost killed by Ellen, Tohka lost her consciousness the moment she felt that even counting on her Angel couldn't do anything.

"Guh……."

But, Tohka's thoughts were interrupted by Shidou's short groan of pain.

"Sh-Shidou! Are you okay!?"

"Ou…….somehow"

After Shidou said that, he somehow managed to stand with his own legs. His body was in wreckage and looked it was going to collapse anytime soon. To support Shidou, Tohka hugged his body tightly. “Tohka…….are you alright too ? What was that just now…….?”

“That……..? What are you talking about?”

Tohka looked surprised while replying back. Shidou then made a difficult face before patting Tohka’s head.

“No…….never mind. I’ll leave those stuff to Kotori and Reine-san. Right now----welcome back, Tohka”

“Mu…….? Umu”

Tohka tilted her head for a moment------but, nodded.

“I’m back……Shidou”

The same time she said that, morning sunlight started pouring in between the separated line of city buildings-----turning both of its shadows into one and projected itself thinly on the building’s floor.

Part 5

Within the dark building filled with rubbles, several shadows were squirming about.

With the morning sun just rising, it was early in the morning and what's more; the Spacequake alarm was being set off so no human would slip into this place but…….if some stranger were to see this scene then, they would first doubt this to be an illusion.

That's because, all of the girls there had the same face without an inch of difference.

"-----DEM second branch building, the targeted person wasn't there"

"The top research lab is a miss"

"Tohka-san was the only one at the 1st branch roof"

While hearing reports from the voices of [Herself] one after another, Kurumi sighed tiredly while sitting on a rubble.

"Looks like……this is a miss too"

Even though she wasted almost 1000 of her clones, it wasn't that productive. After Kurumi sighed disappointedly, she made a small shrug with her shoulders .

"-----the captured Spirit. I wonder where you are"

She mumbled quietly.

Yes. That was what Kurumi was searching for.

The 2nd Spirit confirmed in the world.

---the only existence that has knowledge of the Spirit of Origin.

Even if she eats Shidou who has Spirit Reiryoku, and used [12th bullet](Yud Bet), it will be meaningless if she doesn't kill the Spirit of Origin.

She was captured by DEM industries and was the Spirit that was imprisoned in a facility somewhere in the world.

In order to find her, Kurumi brought up the idea on cooperating with Shidou .

Nonetheless----it seems that it was all for naught this time.

"Well, I don't much of a choice. I guess I'll end this here since I got Shidou-san to pat my head today.----right, all of me?"

After Kurumi said that, the several Kurumi squirming in the darkness disappeared into the shadow.

Epilogue

"Itsuka Shidou-sama

On the third day of the Tenou Festival, 2:50 in the afternoon, please come to the lounge at the backstage of the central stage.

There's something I want to talk to you about in private. If you don't come I'll get angry!

Yours sincerely, Miku"

… And so, this letter which was clearly in a tone completely different from before (and with a kiss print to boot) was sent to Shidou, the evening after the incident with DEM Industries.

"Doing all that… just what"

Shidou read the note in his hand once more, scratching the back of his head.

September 25, Monday. Tenou Festival Day 3 — the third day after the battle with DEM Industries' Japanese branch.

After receiving a whole day of thorough examinations on the <Fraxinus>, Shidou arrived at the Tenguu Square in the Tenou Festival grounds.

Compared to the first day, there were noticeably much fewer people. Of course, Tenou Festival Day 3, supposedly only for the students of the ten schools to participate in, was also the so-called after-night festival.

—In the end, the mysterious huge riot that occurred in Tenguu Square, was determined to be caused by special hallucinogens spread in a terrorist attack.

Although Shidou felt that this was too reckless, Miku's followers who had suddenly awakened yesterday morning, could not remember a thing about being manipulated, and didn't go and investigate the truth either. However illogical the matter was they had to accept it as truth. That no one died in the commotion was already a fortune out of a misfortune.

The damage done to DEM Industries' Japan branch, was also changed to be due to a particular spacequake. Although surveillance cameras still preserved images of some sort, they wouldn't deliberately showcase the battles between Spirits and Wizards in front of the public.

Kurumi who had helped Shidou, had left before he knew it. He thought she would come to ask him for a request… but since then, she didn't appear in front of Shidou again.

He moved around the festival area, walking slowly.

Due to the disturbance, the second day of the Tenou Festival had to be abruptly stopped, and whether the third day could go on was also lurched in precariousness… in the end because of the students' enthusiasm and < Ratatoskr's> covert assistance, it was finally able to safely proceed.

And from the looks of it, the programs on the second day that were halted will be held again tomorrow… that being the case the schedule changed to having the after-night festival being followed by the cultural festival, but the students didn't seem to mind.

"Kuku… Shidou. You've already fully recovered? Fuu — as expected of the man I fancy"

"Question. Tohka still can't come?"

Passing by the maid café, Kaguya and Yuzuru wearing maid costumes asked Shidou.

"Yeah, looks like the examinations are still incomplete. I'll have to buy her a gift"

"Hmm… I see — then, Shidou, why are you dressed like a boy today?"

"Coherence. Yuzuru is also curious. What happened to Shiori?"

"Dressed like a boy… I'm a guy to begin with!"

Shidou scowled as he cried out loud, while the Yamai sisters happily laughed.

I'll come back he said, and waving back, Shidou left the maid café.

That's right. Today Shidou, has something that he must do.

Passing through the booth, he walked towards the central stage. When he opened the door, he heard cheerful tunes and deafening cheers.

Standing on the stage was Miku. Wearing her Astral Dress, singing with her captivating "voice". That everyone was going wild as a result was only natural.

After her performance ended, Miku's shoulders slightly undulated, as she thanked the audience. At that the hall burst into thunderous applause.

"Thank you very much, everyone! Really—"

After that, Miku left the stage. The audience clapped again, shouting Miku's name.

Passing through so many people to get to the lounge would be difficult. Shidou left the stage, and entered by the staff-only passageway.

Then standing in front of the door to the lounge, he knocked on the door.

"Yes, come in–"

From inside came this reply. Shidou steadied his breathing and opened the door.

In the lounge, Miku was alone sitting on a chair. A bottle of sports drink was placed next to her, and around her neck hung a towel.

After the DEM incident, even when Miku regained her "voice", she never put up any form of resistance, and obediently followed the instructions of the < Ratatoskr> personnel who came to deal with the aftermath of the situation.

As Shidou was not present and thus unable to seal Miku's powers, < Ratatoskr> couldn't do anything aside from monitoring her… but during this time, they didn't find any unstable behavior from Miku. Not only that, she even wrote a letter and asked them to deliver it to Shidou. Just what change did Miku's mind undergo. It was as if a demon possessing her had been exorcised and she became a completely different person.

Actually—

"! You came, dar–ling–!"

Miku said with an energetic voice, as she jumped out of the chair, and suddenly hugged Shidou.

"D, darling…!?"

This sudden behaviour took Shidou aback. He couldn't help but look at Miku's childlike carefree smile.

"You… what's going on. I thought you hated men…"

"Ufufu, darling is special. You're even my saviour"

As she said that, she brought her body even closer. Miku's buxom chest pressed against him.

"Wait…"

Shidou's shoulder shuddered. Then he understood. From Miku's face came an amused smile. …As if, it was like her response to his Shiori-chan persona.

Indeed, after the time with DEM Miku's mental state was extremely stable — In addition, it was even said that her affection level towards Shidou had risen sharply… who would have thought that it would be this extreme.

Although he already had this feeling before, sure enough, her character, or rather, her values were like a child's. A thing that she originally really hated, due to a trigger she would become very fond of it. To her, that switch would be the DEM incident.

Shidou gave a wry smile. Thinking of the letter, he asked.

"Then… Miku. You said you wanted to talk, what did you want to talk about ?"

"Aaah, right"

Miku nodded her head as if thinking of something.

Without any unnecessary actions, facing Shidou—

She tiptoed, and kissed Shidou.

"…!?"

It was so sudden, that Shidou opened his eyes wide and was at a loss. However, Miku silently hugged Shidou's body, with no intention of parting lips.

"Mm…"

"…mm"

As the two kissed, Shidou felt something warm flow into his body—

At the same time, the Astral Dress Miku was wearing, also disintegrated into light particles and melted into the air.

"Wah… ah!"

She must have noticed this point, because Miku finally let go of Shidou's lips.

"How come you're so impatient… d, darling is really perverted…"

"N, no! I'm not…"

"Ufufu, just kidding — from Yoshino and the others, I, know everything"

As she said that, Miku tightly clung to Shidou's body, as she smiled.

"Eh…?"

Shidou frowned. What she heard from Yoshino and the others — yes, it must be, the method to seal a Spirit's power.

In other words Miku, knowing that her own power would be sealed, still kissed with Shidou.

"Miku, you…"

Miku who was afraid of losing her "voice", why would she do that.

Listening to Shidou speaking with a nerd-like tone, Miku lightly opened her mouth.

"Because that time… you and I made a promise"

"That time?"

"Yes– ...if I lost my "voice", even if others didn't want me anymore, Shidou-san would still be my fan. That — it wasn't a lie was it?" (TL note: Yes, no 'darling' here. I was surprised too)

"Aaah…"

In the DEM Japan branch building, Shidou did say such a thing. He nodded.

"Of course"

Staring into Miku's eyes, Shidou replied firmly.

This was neither a joke nor a scripted response. Even for Shidou who normally had no interest in idol singers or whatnot, he would still be touched by Miku's singing.

Then Miku looked at Shidou, revealing a carefree smile.

"… You, kept our promise. If it's you, there's no problem. Only you… I can trust"

Her hands hugging Shidou with even more force, Miku continued.

"Even if I lose my "voice". Even if everyone else doesn't turn up to hear me sing — as long as you're there, then, that's enough. If it comes to that… I will sing, just for you"

"Miku—"

Shidou pursed his lips and opened his hands intending to return Miku's hug.

However, just before he was about to hug Miku.

The lounge door opened, and a girl wearing the Rindouji school uniform walked in.

"Miku-san, the audience is strongly demanding for another song, there's no way we can carry on with the next event! Sing another song — eh, eh…!?"

The girl held still her door opening action there and then.

And no wonder. A popular idol with her clothes stripped off, (looking as if she's) about to be violated by an unknown man.

"S, someone help! Someone hellllllppppp!"

"Hey…! Wait! This is a misunderstanding!"

Shidou hurriedly turned towards the girl, who in her confused state turned her gaze, and then ran away.

Miku looking at Shidou rooted to his spot, finally couldn't help but laugh.

"Ahaha, isn't it better for you to run away quickly? Won't you get caught at this rate?"

"You, it's not funny is it…"

Hearing Shidou's words, Miku laughed again, before lifting her face.

"… But, that child, just now requested for another song"

"Eh? Ah… yes"

"Then, I can't not go. As for the clothes… right, I'll borrow some from the maid café — will you come and watch? Darling"

Miku asked. Her eyes were filled with anxiety — as well as that which surpassed said anxiety, a radiance filled with a strong will.

"Okay!"

Shidou nodded firmly.

—On the stage, shone the light from the spotlight.

Right now, the venue which was filled with voices that kept demanding for another song was rendered silent by a shout…

"W–ell, everyone. We meet again–"

Wearing a maid costume Miku again took the stage, and the hall once again rang with cheers.

Shidou was among the audience watching Miku.

Having fled from the lounge before anyone showed up, Shidou went by the entrance of the stage to get to the hall, where he waited for Miku to make her appearance.

"Thank you for requesting for another song — however you can't do that, you're going to trouble the operating staff"

Miku said while pretending to be slightly angry, and the venue filled with replies of "Sor–ry".

"However, I'm also very happy–. —And so, today, I'll specially sing a song that I feel is the most important to me"

After that, Miku started drumming her fingers.

And then, from the stage played a cheerful tune.

Needless to say, the venue was drowned by the cheers, but at the same time, the loud music also clearly flowed into their ears.

"This is…"

Shidou said, watching Miku.

The song that Miku, who had suffered from aphonia, had been about to sing on the stage.

"————! "

Miku quickly started singing, that song that she had not sung for a long time.

In that song, there was no longer any captivating power. The audience also felt that there was a difference between Miku's usual "voice" and this, and they started having doubts.

However — as the song played, the audience also started getting as wild as they were at the concert two days ago.

Moreover, it was in no way inferior to the frenzy they had when they kept requesting for another song.

—Finally, the song ended, and the stage was surrounded by applause and cheers.

"…"

Watching the venue filled with cheers, Miku clenched the microphone, tears streaming down her eyes.

"Everyone… thank you, very much…"

You could hear the constant noise from the audience in the gallery, as well as Miku's voice which was full of energy. However—

"Thank you… very much, darling… I love you!"

Hearing their idol suddenly saying words with such a deep meaning, the venue suddenly filled with commotion… Shidou with sweat forming on his face , quickly left.

Afterword

Hello everyone. I'm Tachibana "Subtitle is Miku but cover is not Miku" Koushi.

This time I'm bringing everyone [Date·A·Live Miku Truth]. Although volumes 3 and 4 were also together, the title using the same Spirit's name for two consecutive volumes is still a first. How do you feel about it. If you're satisfied with it then it's great.

Those readers who have already finished reading should already know, that one part of this volume's illustrations has been exaggerated. Those readers who have yet to read please take a look.

As written earlier, this volume's subtitle is clearly [Miku Truth], but someone else is on the cover. Darkened. Darkened really well.

Speaking of which there was a question earlier, if a female character got darkened she will (will she) become more revealing. Indeed, having been exposed to tokusatsu TV series and anime when young, this stereotype of darkness = evil = erotic big sister should be popular by now. Conversely, for the evil cadre women who dress indecently from the start, when they want to deceive the hero, they'll wear less revealing clothes, and put on a more delicate look. Sure enough there are all sorts of relations between chastity and good or evil, that is, what I want to say in the end is, the navel on the cover is really erotic.

Well, the anime's launch is also approaching. TV anime [Date·A·Live], is expected to launch on April 2013. Please be sure to watch.

In addition, [Date·A·Live]'s short story collection will also be on sale. That which couldn't be written into the work using the story format, the daily lives of the characters has been finished up. The book is expected to be on sale from May . Thank you in advance.

This time, I also received the care of others in order to complete the volume. Tsunako-san, editor-san, as well as other publishers, marketers, media groups and those involved in related merchandise. Thank you very much, really.

Well then, hope to see all of you again someday.

February 2013 Tachibana Koushi

Translation Notes and References

Chapter 6:

1. ↑ Room sizes in traditional Japanese-style rooms are measured in tatamis , A.K.A. straw mats. Common room sizes in Japan range from 4.5 to 8 tatamis, so Miku's 20-tatami room is extremely big compared to normal standards. More info here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tatami
2. ↑ 姉, the proper form for 'elder sister'. Notable contrast to Yoshino and Yuzuru, who use the more commonplace (and informal) onee-sama instead.
3. ↑ A type of Japanese lanterns. See this picture.
4. ↑ A type of Japanese sweet. Refer to this picture.

Chapter 7:

1. ↑ Refer to Volume 3, Chapter 5
2. ↑ This was pretty tricky. The LN had it such that the words were pretty much spread apart. I don't know how to format it in such a way that it'd be similar to the LN, so I left it like this.
3. ↑ Original phrase is apparently an idiom. This roughly seems to be what it means. Unfortunately I couldn't find an English source... the original phrase is と
4. ↑ Bet is basically 2 or b in Hebrew and other older languages. Same deal with Aleph and all of Kurumi's other spells.

5. ↑ Used in V3C5, against Mana and Kotori. The advantage that Zayin has is that it immobilises the opponent, which makes it easier for Kurumi/Shidou to escape in this case. Doesn't really apply due to plot reasons, which is basically Kurumi kicking the bucket if she uses it.
6. ↑ Ellen's nickname for Wescott. Wescott later introduces himself as Isaac Wescott when he speaks to Tohka; Ellen refers to him as アー in this sentence.
7. ↑ Refer to Volume 1, Chapter 5.

Chapter 8:

1. ↑ The LN does not state which Wizard got thrown out through the wall, but I can't really think of a more suitable sentence that doesn't incorporate gender-specific pronouns. I'll likely change this when we get to the anime , but until now it will be assumed that the man was the one who remained.

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